A COLONY OF MERCY

OR

Social Christianity at Work

By JULIE SUTTER

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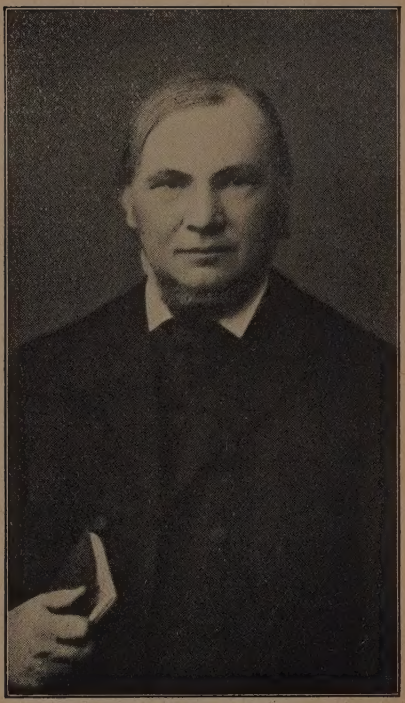

F. Bodelschwingh

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A COLONY OF MERCY: OR SOCIAL CHRISTIANITY AT WORK · BY JULIE SUTTER

AUTHOR OF BRITAIN'S NEXT CAMPAIGN

THIRD EDITION

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

A WORD in explanation. The writer one day found herself at this Colony of Mercy, this Bethel. She did not know much about it, she had gone to take a work there—a work for East Africa, too much for her own hands—and she went to fasten its threads in that Pastor's study. But having gone for one thing she brought away another: she brought away a vision of a PROGRAMME OF CHRISTIANITY *realised*. She had translated into German the booklet which sets forth the mission of Christianity, showing it to be *a comforting of all that mourn*. Strangely enough, the booklet was printing just as she got to Bethel, the proof-sheets actually finding her there, and how could she help seeing the Programme realised before her eyes—for Bethel *is* a comforter of all who mourn, proving herself such comforter in her wondrous work. "*To bind up the broken-hearted*," says the Programme, "*to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.*" These words were ringing in her ears as she went about the Colony, and she knew—for she saw it—the Programme is true.

Thus the keynote of the booklet is the keynote of this story, the true reading of Bethel having come to her like a harmony set to this key. Bethel appeared

as a *working model* of the booklet's teaching. A Programme deduced from the spirit of Christianity, however beautiful, might yet remain a vision only, a noble theory; but she saw this vision realised, and knew therefore it speaks true.

J.S.

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THE PROGRAMME

To bind up the broken-hearted;
To proclaim liberty to the captives,
And the opening of the prison to them that are bound.

. . .

To comfort all that mourn.

. . . . .

To give unto them—

Beauty for ashes,
The oil of joy for mourning,
The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

A COLONY OF MERCY

OR

SOCIAL CHRISTIANITY AT WORK

CHAPTER I

PRISONERS OF ZION

"The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

A FEW years ago a church was opened, the foundation stone of which had been laid by the late Emperor Frederick, then Crown Prince of Germany. It is a beautiful church rising in a beech wood on a hill in the Teutoburger Forest. It is cruciform, and the people who meet there in a peculiar sense are bearing a cross. "Come unto Me, ye heavy laden," says a marble-wrought figure of Christ, the Healer, over the main porch; and as you enter with eyes uplifted, you read the words over the high-arched chancel: "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion," or, as the German version, looking to a "restoring" to come, has it, with fuller meaning, "When the Lord shall release the bound ones of Zion, we shall be like them that dream." Fitly, this

church has been called Zion Church, for the hundred and twenty-sixth Psalm in a beautiful metrical rendering is the favourite song—the song of longing, of hope, and of promise—of that congregation. It is a congregation of epileptics. Fourteen hundred of them are now gathered around that church. The name of the colony is Bethel.

Bethel is not an asylum, not a charitable institution as we know them; it is rather, and in the fullest sense, a colony of mercy, a commonwealth of sufferers—the care of epileptics being the central object round which other needs have gathered, and as they arose, have been met. Bethel never was planned: it is a growth, a living thing.

From the main entrance of the church you have a lovely view into what has popularly come to be called the "Silly Valley," which name, however, is fast being replaced by that of "Happy Valley," and the visitor to the imbeciles and half-imbeciles sheltered there will not be slow to discover the reason. We shall pay a visit presently to the several Homes nestling in its winding length; we are at this moment content with the view at our feet. It is a farmhouse to which one or two newer buildings have been added; the beech wood opening out before you, the hills rising beyond, frame this picture, and the whole seems a vision of peace. You are having a peep into the cradle of the place. That farmhouse—it was named Eben-Ezer—saw the seed-planting of all this colony; there, just five and twenty years ago, a beginning was made with four epileptics. If a creation, Bethel is a creation from above; but faith was the soil, love was the seed, and there has been a mighty outcome.

The colony now consists of five distinct branches :—

I. The *Homes for Epileptics*, these being the BETHEL proper.

II. The *Westphalian Mother-house for the Training of Deaconesses*—SAREPTA—which in the course of little more than twenty years has produced a nursing and working staff of six hundred Sisters.

III. The *Westphalian Brotherhood*—NAZARETH— forming the male complement of the Deaconesses' Institution ; it was started fourteen years ago, and over two hundred Deacons or Brothers have since been trained.

IV. The *Labour Colony*—WILHELMSDORF—to grapple with social distress.

V. The Association WORKMAN'S HOME ; a scheme for providing homes of their own for the labouring classes.

These are the main branches of the work done at Bethel, but there are offshoots of noble effort in every direction, which are best left to appear as the story is told.

The forlorn condition of epileptics was the need out of which Bethel has grown. Has the reader any idea how many of our fellow-creatures are suffering from this terrible disease ? It is difficult to get at reliable statistics, for epilepsy is one of the sorrowful afflictions of mankind which both the sufferers and their friends endeavour to hide ; but by a simple process, seeking to minister to a host of out-patients over and above the flock taken in, and by special researches from parish to parish, the workers of Bethel have arrived at the conclusion that one and a half to two per thousand is probably within the mark. But this means seventy to a hundred thousand epileptics in Germany. If this estimate may be applied to England—and why should it not ? the disease is as old

as mankind and known all over the globe—nay, taking but one per thousand, there would be about forty thousand epileptics in this country. Are there? Then where are they, and what is being done for them?

Epilepsy is a mysterious and fearful affliction, an unsolved problem. It is a disorder of the borderland between body and soul, its seat the nerve-centres and the brain—this is about all even medical science can tell us. It was known to the ancients, and was probably as frequent then as now. Hippocrates treats of it in a special pamphlet. We learn from the New Testament and other sources that its terrors abounded in the time of our Lord. It prevailed in the Roman Empire, and frightful indeed were the remedies which were then employed. According to Origen, epilepsy was the thorn in the flesh for the removal of which St. Paul thrice besought the Lord, his prayer not being heard, or, rather, being heard in the answer, "My grace is sufficient for thee." Some of the greatest intellects the world has known have gone through life with this "thorn in the flesh." Julius Cæsar was epileptic, and so was Mohammed; Peter the Great also and Napoleon I. suffered from this malady; Petrarch and Jean Jacques Rousseau likewise were epileptics. With these sufferers the affliction must have been of a kind which befell them at rare intervals only, for it certainly never interfered either with their ambition or with their clearness of mind. Yet its deteriorating effects on the mental powers are well known. To popular perception, this disease has always been the "*morbus sacer*," the "*morbus divus*," the punishment of the gods, a punishment even for special sin—"Who has sinned, he or his father?" Hippocrates knew better—"It appears to me 'divine' in no other sense

than any illness is divine!" The Christian knows that all illness *is* divine, sent, not always in punishment, but always in love. Many of the "bound ones" of Bethel are learning this lesson, as through the shadow of their affliction they are growing to be children of peace.

Often enough it is the father's sin, drink especially,* which lays this cross upon his child; but it cannot be said that heredity is the most common factor. According to the experience of Bethel, the falling sickness in very many cases is due to a shock to the nervous system, to which attaches no personal blame. Here is a case of one rendered epileptic through the sudden news of the death of a relative. Here is another, a boy coming upon a mutilated corpse in a wood is seized with fright and falls in a fit. Here is yet another, a little girl is playing at her mother's feet, a stroke of lightning kills the mother, and the little girl from that moment becomes epileptic. However caused, it is a terrible affliction. Have you ever witnessed a fit? seen an apparently healthy person, your fellow-traveller maybe, fall at your feet with a shriek that goes through you, the cry of an anguished soul? The limbs in convulsions, the head jerking to and fro, the features set with an expression of unspeakable agony, the eyes rolling wildly and then glazed as in death, the mouth foaming,—this is the aggravated fit, and no wonder

---

* Though drink is not by any means the only predisposing cause, yet it has been found that the percentage of this terrible illness keeps pace with the consumption of alcohol; in certain districts in Germany where distilleries flourish, the number from two rises to four and even six per thousand of the population. It keeps pace with any kind of debauch; but these are not the only causes.

people shrink from the sight of it. The poor epileptic is shunned; his own family in many cases are almost ashamed of him; he is hidden away. In the poorer classes of society, where he ought to gain his own livelihood, who will employ him? The workshop, the office, are closed to him; the church even, once he has had a seizure there, tells him not again to return. He is condemned to starvation, mental, moral, spiritual; no one will have him anywhere. Now, this is sad enough, even when there are means for his sustenance; but think of the poor!

Here is a stonemason, on the death of his wife left with four children under ten, one of these epileptic and alone with her little sisters. Here is an orphan—there are scores of them at Bethel—for which a poor parish could do nothing but pay a pittance to the most wretched cottage in the village for the keep of that helpless worm. She had fits almost daily. There are children, tended now and cared for by the hands of love at Bethel, haunted in their dreams by the memory of what they have gone through. A poor man is there, an imbecile and has been so for years, but remembering, as often is the case, this and that of his early life before the never-ending night closed in upon him. He will tell you, amid sobs, the story of his cruel childhood—he will tell it you at the least sign of tendernesss on your part; you have but to stroke his hand, you have but to look at him with an eye of pity, and you touch that chord.

Here is another case, typical of the hundreds appealing to Bethel for admission: "I am a cripple, twenty-five years of age, and since my fourteenth year have suffered from epileptic fits. The first overtook me just after I had been apprenticed. I was dismissed from the workshop,

and though I tried and tried again, anxious to learn a trade, no master would keep me. I tried work at home, but it was almost impossible because of the constant attacks. My parents are very poor, and never could pay any one to look after me; they are both at work which takes them from home daily. Thus I have been in constant danger of life and limb, with the result of several serious accidents. I had learned to do a little fretwork, and was rising from that occupation one day to sweep away the cuttings. There was a heated stove in the kitchen, and on it a kettle with boiling water. I ought not to have gone so near, for I had a fit, fell unconscious, and lay on the stove, the boiling water pouring over me. In that state, terribly burned, I was picked up some time after and taken to the infirmary. Thirteen months I lay there, my right arm had to be amputated, and I came away a cripple. The parish since has allowed me half a crown a week; I am not therefore starving, but what I need more than bread is a friend to watch over me, and I pray you earnestly, receive me into your homes."—Yet another case: a father, a busy workman, from morning to nightfall away in the town, a stepmother absorbed in her own children, a poor epileptic youth left to himself, wandering about the village streets, or roaming the country uncared for, in constant danger of being run over by passing vehicles. He has hurt himself badly in his fits. He is, moreover, a half-paralysed cripple, having a club foot and a palsied hand.

Ill-cared-for epileptics are to be found everywhere, and as years go on, the disease works havoc not only in the bodily frame. They grow irritable, distrustful, quarrelsome; but worst of all, the hand of imbecility is

upon them, and the end is idiotcy, the end is insanity. Such are met with in every country, an army of helpnessness.

To Christianity, this very helplessness constitutes a plea. To Christian charity every stricken one is a creditor to whom she has a debt to pay—the debt of service. One of the saints of the ancient church, once being taunted with the poverty of his community, produced the cripples, the sick and suffering of that church, and said, "These are our treasures." The church of our own time, the true Christian among us, is learning to say likewise—These are our treasures, our creditors, we owe them service. But though there is provision among us for almost every kind of human suffering, nothing was done till within the memory of this generation to alleviate the misery of epileptics. Hidden away with their trouble, no one has sought them out. If they appeal for help, there was the poorhouse, there was the idiot asylum, or possibly a hospital. But are these the places for an epileptic in the intervals of his affliction? Remember he can work, and he ought to work; for occupation alone, keeping him from brooding over his trouble, will stay in a measure the inevitable decay. If taken in hand in time, not more than five per cent. would be given over to helpless idiotcy; yet even though taken in hand—such at least is the experience of Bethel—not more than seven to eight per cent. are likely ever to be cured, and these only the very young; thus there is an intervening host to be occupied, to be watched, to have their burden eased till they lay it down in death. These are the "bound ones" of Bethel.

Hope of bodily cure, then, is almost precluded; yet the great need of the epileptic is not a home for incurables,

but a refuge, a place where he can first of all be at rest, learning the great lesson, "Rest thou thy soul upon the Lord." What a restless thing that soul of his has been, how driven between hope and fear! How he has spent himself, seeking help and finding none! Doctors could not restore him; then how anxiously did he try the "unfailing" remedies of quackery and superstition—there are hundreds claiming mysterious power and promising the certain cure—remedies often foolish, often disgusting, and sometimes immoral, worse almost in their degrading influence than the disease itself. One need not go back to the Romans for folly and darkness. Think of the sufferer's inward state, seeking such help and finding none! Moreover, if he be a sensitive creature, the constant cry of his agonised soul is, "I am an outcast, I am set aside, I am shunned." He is far worse off in this respect than the lunatic, for the insane man knows nothing of his insanity, while the epileptic in most cases has a clear enough perception of his condition. He knows that every attack of his malady is a deadening blow to his intellect; he knows that his irascibility, his helpless fits of anger, his maliciousness—part, these, of the distemper he writhes under—are but the moral outbursts of a trouble he cannot overcome. He knows there is an *uncanniness* about his affliction which makes even friends say, "'Twere better he were dead."

This is why first of all "Be still," the true medicine for all our deepest woes, is the one thing *he* needs, and those who would help him must help him first of all to an atmosphere of that stillness. It is something better than the tending of his stricken frame in a hospital, something better than mere shelter in the hour of his weakness, it

is the stillness of the children of Zion lifting their eyes to the hills whence cometh their aid. "Bring him to Me," said Christ, when not even the disciples could help the stricken one! And there is that about the life at Bethel, healthful, natural, and singularly free from all religious excitement, which constantly reminds these sufferers of a healing to come. It goes to one's heart to hear them sing—that great congregation of incurables—"When the Lord shall release the bound ones, we shall be like them that dream; then our mouth shall be filled with laughter and our tongue with singing, for the Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad." And there is a true measure of gladness with them even now, a great hope; they are learning to wait and to be still. Their Pastors say, and one may see for oneself, that of their very hymn-books no part is more used and leaf-worn than the songs of thanksgiving and of praise.

A strange feeling of awe naturally steals over the visitor when, for the first time, he meets with this people in their beautiful church. He has been warned there will be "fits," and even as he enters he sees the preparation for them—a curtained-off partition in the four entrance lobbies, with couches which have a sad look of much use about them. But everything is managed so quietly; you hear a moan or a cry, you see some brothers or sisters rising to take away the sufferer,—it never creates a disturbance. And what though occasionally a *bad* fit comes on—it often is but a giddiness, a momentary unconsciousness, passing like a summer cloud, yet at times you may witness a serious attack. The beautiful antiphonal service, maybe, has attuned your own heart, you are forgetting there is trouble, your soul is away on the pastures green by the still waters; there is a sudden and

terrible shriek—shriek upon shriek as of the lunatic when the spirit tare him. A poor fellow has started from his seat and falls foaming, the night of unconsciousness quickly overtaking his vexed spirit. They have carried him away, and he will be lying on one of those couches, knowing nothing of his trouble. The billows are passing over his soul; he may wake presently, and in through the little window will stream the voice of the preacher, the song of the people. It was close upon such a harrowing attack one Sunday evening, the people rose and their hymn filled the building—"Sun of my soul, Thou Saviour dear," they sang, "it is not night if Thou be near"—and then they went home through the darkening beech wood quietly, though every one of these singers knew that he or she might be taken with such a fit the very next moment, and what assurance have they it is not the night of death upon them, the last of their many struggles? They are learning to be still, with the stillness of Zion.

CHAPTER II

THE GROUNDWORK

"The righteous is an everlasting foundation."

IF you ask Pastor von Bodelschwingh who is the true founder and promoter of the work of mercy going on beneath the shadow of that church, he will take you to the quiet burial ground on the hill, at the farther end of the beech wood. There he will show you, as the last in a long row of sleepers, the resting-place of an aged pilgrim. You read an inscription :—

WILHELM HEERMANN,
THE FRIEND OF THE RAVENSBERGER PEOPLE,
Born March 31st, 1800 ; *Died January 26th*, 1882.
"The Lord shall be Thine Everlasting Light."—Isaiah lx., 20

This man had been blind for sixty years. A peasant's son, of the Ravensberger country, he fell, when a young man, from the hayloft of his father's farm, had concussion of the brain, and lost his eyesight. But this closing up of the outward eye opened the windows of his soul for the light of heaven to stream in. He became a truly godly man, a bright Christian, and a blessing through a long lifetime to the whole country side. That Ravensberger Land, a province within the province of Westphalia, no larger than a moderate English county, owns a people of peculiar sterling worth, a peasantry of the good old

German type, thriving on their own soil, and owing no man anything. A God-fearing people of old, the light of the Gospel had grown dim, hid under the bushel of a lukewarm ministry. Blind Heermann saw deeper than others, and knew what was wanting. Year after year he went about the country from village to village—it was all he could do—and *taught the people to pray*, to pray for Christian pastors. He went pleading with the earthly authorities for true shepherds to the people, going, upon occasion, as far as Berlin even, at a time when railroads were not, to intercede with the king; and his pleading and his prayer found answer. From one pulpit and another the gospel-sound was heard; faith grew, and love abounded—that love which, being blessed in her own home, goes out to the highways and hedges. It is not as a company of saints those peasant folk would wish to be spoken of; theirs is a simple and wholesome Christianity, and it will appear in the course of these pages what is understood by Christianity in the Ravensberger Land. But if you would know what a *Missionsfest* is, go there. If these people want a holiday they go for miles in their Sunday clothes to hear a missionary on leave, or their own pastors, conversant with missionary matters, proclaim the victory of the Cross in heathen lands. And they rejoice in the news, returning the happier to dairy or plough. They come long distances, and bring their offerings with them; those who have much, give much, but not the least noble are the mites of the poor. Think of a farmer's lassie found fainting as she was starting for her home after one of these gatherings. Taken back to the place, she begged the pastor, amid blushes, to let her have again one halfpenny of a day's wages she had put into the plate. She did

not earn more than her keep, and had thought she could go without food that day to send her little all to the heathen. But she had set out in the grey dawn of the morning, the way had been long, and a *Missionsfest* in Germany never is short; and though she had feasted her soul, sitting fasting in the church, here she was faint for want of a morsel. The afternoon sun was low, and she had some ten miles before her: would he return her one halfpenny to buy a piece of bread with, and she hoped it was not robbing the Lord, she had meant to give all. Needless to say, she did not get back her halfpenny, but was taken to the manse for a plentiful meal, and then went home to think of her *Missionsfest* till the next came round. At such gatherings the wealthier peasant women have been known to put their amber necklaces into the plate, strings of amber beads as large as walnuts, ugly enough, but much prized as heirlooms, part of the national costume, and some of them worth ten pounds or more, for quantity of amber. These are incidents of past days, when the "first love" was upon the land; but the good folk in that country have never departed from their true interest in missions and in any good work they can aid.

It is, of course, Pastor von Bodelschwingh's own beautiful modesty if he takes the inquirer to that grave; but there is a deep truth in the humble assertion behind which he would hide his own good share. Blind Heermann for half a century ploughed the field on which a noble harvest has grown; and it is lovely to think that for the last seven or eight years of his life he was an inmate of Bethel—that is, more correctly speaking, of "Sarepta"—not because he needed the sisters to nurse him, being hale to the last, but he was old now, and

Bethel was thus paying back her debt. And the aged man, awaiting the home-call in their midst, went in and out among the epileptics, telling them of the Love he had known; and when he died the whole country-side turned out, though it was in the depth of winter, to bear testimony at his grave of what he had done for them.

If you want to start a Bethel, a true home for the suffering, the sick, the destitute, the great thing required is not, in the first place, money. You may collect a hundred thousand pounds, and spend it too, yet your hoped-for Bethel is not thus reached. It is not a foundation of money, it is a foundation of men that is wanted, of men and women with the love of Christ in their hearts. It is a great thing to put your money into the plate; it is a greater thing to put in your own cherished amber beads; it is greatest of all to put in yourself. Now, in that Ravensberger Land, so long and so faithfully prayed for, and prayed with, by that blind peasant, there is a wondrous spirit of giving abroad; when the harvests are gathered in you should see the waggons of potatoes, of wheat, of farm produce generally, arriving at Bethel —the freewill tithes, largely given and gladly given, and given simply because they love this giving. But more than this, that people know how to give themselves; in some parts there is scarcely a family but one or more of the daughters and sons offer for service in the Kingdom. Scores of deaconesses are of the daughters of that land, dozens of ministering brothers—or if you will go further, of missionaries—are drafted from that stock. If Bodelschwingh has been able to train such an army of helpers, it is because he has such a countryside at his back. Bethel is indeed a blossom of the Church, but it has

grown on a soil of Christ-stirred humanity; it is the outcome of a people with whom the religious life and the everyday life are so blended that it is as natural to them to watch and pray over any work of mercy going on in their midst, as to till and tend their fields.

Bethel recently celebrated her semi-jubilee—a sight not easily to be forgotten. It was on a splendid Sunday in July, for on a week-day these work-a-day people could not so largely attend. Some of them had started at two in the morning, and by six o'clock they came streaming up the valley, awakening Bethel—nay, Bethel was up by that time—but greeting her with their splendid bands. *Posaunen*-choirs they call them from the beautiful word in the German Bible for *the* trumpet. By way of military instruments used for religious purposes, England has her experience of the Salvation Army; but let it be understood, the *Posaunen-Chöre* of the Ravensberger peasant folk are a thing to be heard. As *chorale* after *chorale* came rolling up the valley that morning you might have thought yourself in the heavenly Jerusalem. Indeed, these *Posaunen-bläser* (trumpet blowers is a miserable rendering), with their trombones, their clarionets and horns, great and small, could any day take their place in a Händel or Bach choir. How has this come about? Not by Blind Heermann, surely? No; but among the pastors given to that blessed Ravensberger country by his prayers, there was one who thought with Luther that while a man makes music the devil has little chance with him, and he started a band in his village. This was the beginning, some twenty or thirty years ago. These bands are now an institution all over the country, Pastor Kuhlo, a son of the old *Posaunen*-father, and like him a splendid musician, being band-

leader-general. Every village has its own band, but he has them all under training ; they have their weekly practice, each band for itself, meeting at intervals for common practice. The instruments are provided out of a general fund, and the whole is managed with method and orderliness. That day saw seven or eight thousand people gathered at Bethel, and several hundreds of instruments among them. And not only instruments : the peasant girls and young women are trained by that same Pastor Kuhlo to a hymn singing which is nothing short of marvellous. They gave proof of it several times that day, he, with his little trumpet for a baton, calling upon them, and these women rising with a simple dignity—girls mostly, but they looked women in their national costume with their quaint little caps. There was a pretty modesty about them, yet an almost queenly absence of all shyness, and their voices were "soft and low," sweetly modulated—you never thought of peasant girls—but full of volume and clearness and musical wealth. They sang, now the soprano, now the alto in response ; it almost brought the tears to one's eyes for the unaffected simplicity of it. It was not art, it was nature answering the touch of art, these voices all instinct with the waving instrument which guided them. They seemed as one voice. The songs of praise and of thanksgiving were well rendered that day.

Consider for a moment the elevating influence of this ! These people should not be taken for saints, but their music is the music of saints, an occupation truly to the glory of God. For one thing is quite certain : these hundreds of trumpeters, while practising their instruments together or singly, are far from the public-house. They meet on two or three evenings a week, they lead

the singing of the congregation on Sundays, they have their festivals, choral and instrumental, on all sorts of occasions, of sacred music mostly, for which they practise diligently; the devil of drink, anyway, has no chance while this goes on.

These people, then, came flocking, bands and all, to greet Bethel on her "Jubilee." There was an early service at 8 a.m. in the church to welcome the first arrivals—the other services, morning and afternoon, being in the beech wood, for the church could not hold such numbers. Weather permitting, the Bethelites often have service in the open air. It was a most stirring day—a sight to witness—the epileptics in the centre, surrounded in very deed by the Ravensberger Land. That day the hundred and twenty-sixth Psalm rang mightily, the singing of the home congregation being taken up by the visitors, and the hundreds of instruments; and what though even amid such service of song the well-known plaintive shriek would rise, and a poor patient be carried to the tent made ready to receive him, yet there was praise and thanksgiving in every heart.

At the early service, the pastor's text for a short address had been, "Let us arise and go to Bethel." He acknowledged warmly and simply that in the active Christian love of these gathered peasant folk, the great work done at Bethel had its mainstay. "You give not only of your substance," he said, "you give us your sons and daughters; and yet there is room!" Then followed a stirring appeal for more of these sons and daughters, and, without doubt, yet more will obey the call. Yes, Bethel is strong in the love of Christian people such as these. Here is proof:—

That day a new house was opened, having room

for eighty to a hundred epileptic imbecile little girls—it had long been wanted, and here it was all ready for occupation. It had been raised at a cost of four thousand pounds. A fortnight before just about half that sum was to hand, when the pastor suddenly was fired with a great longing to present this house free of debt at this Jubilee. He put out an appeal to the friends of Bethel round about—*Let all parents send one penny as a thank-offering for every healthy child they have.* And there was a wave of response from far and near: within one short fortnight four hundred thousand pennies came in—four hundred thousand thank-offerings for children hale and sound, and the good pastor had his desire given him, his Baby Castle was free of debt. Four hundred thousand pennies in one fortnight sent by grateful parents, and they came with such pretty messages—"four children, four pennies, *for a child in heaven two*," they paid doubly for the children the Good Shepherd had taken home! A happy husband and father writing: "Five children, all sound and well, five pennies; for a splendid wife, five pennies to boot!". What a happy house that Baby Castle! Four hundred thousand pennies in one fortnight is wonderful enough; but to think that four hundred thousand glad thanks were therewith presented, to think that so many thousand hearts combined in turning their gratitude for their own children into pitying love for the helpless ones—that indeed is a strength to rest on! Bethel need never fear while she can strike her roots into such soil. The love and the prayers of humble folk are the mainstay of that work of mercy.

The peasant congregation gathering that day, how happy they looked! What a pride they took in hearing

of the growth of the year's work, aye the twenty-five years' work, and how they went about in the intervals of service from place to place, looking at the houses they had dozens of times seen before! "It is for love of the Master," said an old man with weather-beaten face and work-worn hand—"to further His work, that is the one thing required of us." And they are satisfied this work at Bethel is in the best of hands—they all know Pastor von Bodelschwingh, and have long known him.

Several thousand "thank-offerings" that day were added as an overflow; but these people did not therefore, like the girl we have mentioned, pass the day starving. Bethel could harbour her guests. By fifties and by hundreds they were billeted upon the houses, and a plentiful dinner, for which each recipient paid twopence, was served them—the twopence being levied with a fine tact, that an army of *such* visitors would not wish to feel a burden.

Having witnessed that day, one understood how it was possible that such a work had grown up and multiplied within the short space of five-and-twenty years.

CHAPTER III

BETHEL

"A city set on a hill."

FIVE-AND-TWENTY years ago Germany had done as little for her epileptics as England has to this day. In south-western France the cry first was raised by Pasteur Bost, whose noble institutions at La Force, in Dordogne, are known to Christian people of this country, yet not so largely as they should be. He has gone to his rest, but his work is still carried on. It was he who first pointed out the moral wrong done to a patient of this kind, even though he be intellectually weakened, if there is no better provision for him than the idiot asylum; the great duty to him being an upholding of his inner man with a firm kindly grasp, and not to surround him with scenes to the level of which he must the more speedily sink. The cry raised was heard on the Rhine. A conference was called, and men said the Church of Christ had a duty towards the epileptics. It was not through medical progress, it was through Christian sympathy, the perception gained ground that a great neglect, medical, moral, spiritual, was waiting to be redressed. Here was a whole class, and a numerous class, stricken with all but incurable disease, yet many of them capable of much good work in the intervals of their disease utterly neglected. They were practically outcasts: even

the Church had said, "You are disturbing the rest." They had knocked at many doors, they had wasted their substance on many physicians, they were a host of sorrowing ones, with only the idiot or lunatic asylum at the end of a long vista of despair. They were told they had "fits," yet is there not a sufficiency of love in the world to stand by a man in the hour of his infirmity that he may take courage between? But the world was afraid of them, the world of usefulness had said, "We cannot employ you."

What then can the Church of Christ do? Can it do more than show them the heaven where epilepsy is not, where even their tears are wiped away? No private undertaking could ever sufficiently grapple with this terrible need; not even public charity can, for the public asylum is not the thing wanted. A fellowship of Christian service is the only thing which can effectually step into this breach. The "Comfort ye, comfort ye," surely was written for this people also. What the epileptic needs most of all is a strengthening, a steadying of his soul, and he sadly needs comfort. Give it him. Surround him with sympathy. Give him nature, give him flowers, give him the song of birds, give him the blue sky, drawing his eye heavenward, and give him work. Give him all that will tend to the calming of his troubled soul—give him love. He has been so fretful, so despairing; curtain him with compassion, and help him to be still. "This kind can come forth by nothing but prayer and fasting." Prayer? the inward stillness; fasting? what is it but the great "Thy will be done"! "I used to be so dreadfully afraid of these fits," said one, as we went about Bethel seeking to understand their life, "but now I am trying to think it is just a *falling* into the hands of Christ." That

man was beginning to know the secret of living, the one lesson of life—a falling, in things great, in things little, into His hands. It is easy to fall when you are quite sure hands of love are about you.

The Church of Christ, then, is the family to take in this troubled one. In that Church all know they are falling ones but for the Love which upholds them, and it makes them very merciful, very tender; they alone can nurse the epileptic and be his stay.

It was in 1867 that Pastor Balcke, of Rheydt, a little town in the Rhine-land, took up the call, and the provincial committee of Home Missions convened a meeting at Bielefeld, a manufacturing town in Westphalia; a resolution was passed to make a beginning in that populous centre. Bethel, with its beech wood and hill—such a retreat of country quiet and *away*ness from the world—is in the very outskirts of busy Bielefeld. It lies at the foot of an old castle, a stronghold of the Counts of Lippe in days gone by, when it was thought necessary to put such bridle upon a town. It is well worth while on a fine evening to ascend the height on which that turreted castle stands, the twin hill of what is now called Zion Hill. You have a splendid outlook over the blue ranges of the Teutoburger forest, the Weser mountains, and the fruitful country between, the principality of Lippe Detmold and that thrice blessed Ravensberger Land—a glorious expanse of meadow and field and woodland stretching away in the mellow distance. It is the Germany of Tacitus, where Arminius, the Prince of the Cheruscans, defeated Varus and his Roman legions. The name of the castle is the Sparrenburg, and at its foot, in the narrow valley, a mere cutting between the two hills, stood a farmhouse. It is the house on which we looked

from the main entrance of the church. A respectable peasant lived there, who had been a well-to-do man, owning much of the land on which Bethel now stands, and the hill with its beech wood. It had been the home of his fathers for generations. That property was to be sold, and it was bought by those friends who were seeking to make a home for epileptics.

Even the little story connected with this property now acquired by Charity is worth telling. That peasant —his name is Steinkamp—had to part with the home of his fathers for no fault of his own; he understood his farming and was an honest man, too honest and innocent perhaps for a ne'er-do-weel brother of his, who dragged him down to his ruin. The place got mortgaged and poor Steinkamp was a beggar. He went abroad, seeking to make his way among strangers. Years after he returned, the love of home being strong. He was old now and had neither kith nor kin; and Bethel did not close her gates against him. The visitor now going about the colony is sure to fall in with an old man somewhere about the fields, whitehaired, but as straight as a pine, and with a look of old Wrangel about him. It is "Field-marshal" Steinkamp, over eighty now, but up at four of a summer morning, and about the property all day long to see that the farming goes well, and the cattle are tended; the place is the property of his heart anyway, and having no children of his own, there is all this family of epileptics in their stead. Himself one of the adopted ones of Bethel, he also has adopted Bethel. He does not feel turned out now of house and home, but rejoices to see what in the good providence of God has come of it. He in no way is a recipient of charity, though Charity took him in, for he fills his place.

This aged peasant, once the owner of all he surveys, living in a little chamber opening out of the hayloft, is simply the patriarch of this commonwealth, where no man calls anything his own, where there is a wealth of service, where every one, pastor or nursing brother, is rich, having his daily need provided for and spending his life in ministering to the rest.

This farmhouse then was bought, and a beginning was made with four epileptics. It was named Eben-Ezer. That was an hour of faith when a venerable pastor—in position a bishop of the church, only they do not call them bishops in Germany—took these four "first-fruits" and, by way of opening the house, knelt down with them quietly in the farm parlour asking God's blessing upon the work. It was the planting of a mustard seed, and what a tree has come of it!

The greatest things have the smallest beginnings; Bethel has grown. There was no outward show, no noise made. Those who put their faith into this work five-and-twenty years ago were quite satisfied to begin humbly. Only that one farmhouse was then acquired; the rest of the property, passing into other hands, was bought in gradually as Bethel grew. The little home for epileptics had no money. Friends it had, and friends of the best kind, friends who could pray; but it had no patronage. It began with simple faith that it was right to begin; for epileptics abounded and no one did anything for them.

Two years later another mustard seed was planted in that same soil, indeed close by, and this also has grown into a tree—Sarepta, the Westphalian Mother-house for Deaconesses. And these two trees, although each is an independent growth, doing its own work of sheltering,

have their boughs of mercy so intertwined, the one being handmaiden to the other, that you could not do full justice to either without pointing out that in truest sense they are twins.

Again, a few years later, in 1872, when the seedling trees had begun to grow, Friedrich von Bodelschwingh was called to be the directing pastor of the work; and though not the original author, he has ever since been the very soul of the colony, an instrument of God's special preparing. He has of course been told that an outline account of the work was to be given to English readers. "Do not say anything in praise," he urged, "not of any of us; if anything has been done, it is by the goodness of God, who has used us." And it needs but a look into the face of the humble man, overflowing with the love which fills him, to make one feel it were almost wronging him to sing *his* praises, but they are reflected in the work which has grown up about him.

A *Freiherr*, that is a baron, by birth, of an ancient Westphalian family, he grew up in surroundings which by no means indicated the work awaiting him. His father was Minister of Finance, and afterwards Prime Minister, of Prussia. Young Frederick in those days was a playfellow and schoolroom companion of his august namesake, the late Emperor Frederick, who, to the last, preserved a warm personal regard for him. To this boyish friendship much of the kindliness is due with which the three Emperors subsequently have been, and in the persons of their present Majesties continue to be, interested in Bethel. It is indeed curious how, from the throne to the cottage, Bethel now has friends.

Herr von Bodelschwingh, though quite ignorant of the ultimate object of it, has had a perfect training, and

is at home in every department of the great machinery of which he is the guiding hand.

First, his home training.

If anywhere you see a great man, be sure there is a true woman behind him, be she his wife, or mother, or sister. Bodelschwingh's mother was the woman who moulded him: one trait of her character suffices to show this. Though the wife of a Cabinet Minister, having to shine in society and be fashionable, she never, if she could help it, dealt with fashionable tradespeople, but ever tried rather to employ the small folk, those who had difficulty in winning their daily bread. The humble dressmaker, the shop in the back street, were those she patronised wherever it was possible. Hers was the true spirit of charity. Through her he early acquired a love for the working people round about, and tried to influence them. His early college training was apparently aimless—arts chiefly, with a leaning to natural science: yet, considering the grasp he now has of everything pertaining to national economy, a career like his father's in the public service would seem to have been his ultimate destiny. But his health was not strong, and after having served his year in the army, he went through a course of gentleman-farming, acquiring the practical knowledge so useful to him now. For several years he managed a large property, being steward of the estate to a friend of his father. It was then, more even than in his early home years, that he looked into the lives of labouring men, endeavouring to be their helper in things temporal and spiritual.

A little story is told of his distributing tracts to his humble friends, and how one day conscience spoke: "Do *you* read these tracts?" He kept back one he was just

giving away; it was a missionary tract, ending with the home question, "What are *you* doing to bring the heathen to Christ?" It was the turning point of his life. That question haunted him, and did not again leave him till he had made up his mind to become a messenger of the Gospel. He went back to college, first Berlin, then Basle, studying theology, and having taken his degree, he resolved to offer himself as a missionary. The Basle Missionary College was planning to send him to India, but before this was carried into effect, a discerning friend invited him to Paris, telling him there were heathen there, and lost sheep among the German ragpickers and crossing sweepers. Among these he laboured, collecting them into a little mission church which still does its work. He lived in a wooden châlet, a contrivance in portable sections, sent as a specimen of Swedish workmanship to the great London exhibition of 1851, and thence obtained by a friend for use of the mission. A stone or brick building was beyond their means; besides, this missionary loved to live among his people, and they were of the poorest.

To this humble abode, in the Faubourg La Villette, he brought his young wife, a namesake and cousin of his—no small thing for a girl who, like himself, had grown up in a Berlin mansion. Her father also was in the Cabinet. And there his eldest child was born. It was the young mother's health which eventually obliged him to return to Germany. He was called to a pastorate in 1864, in a village not far from his present sphere. There three more children were born, and there God took him through the furnace. His four little ones, within a fortnight, were taken from him by diphtheria ensuing upon whooping cough, and the poor parents

were left alone in the desolate manse. It was not long after this sorrow that Bethel called him to gather about him a great family of the helpless, and that is why he is such a father to them, most loving to the most stricken, most tender to the least! God's ways often are sharp and thorny, but the end is peace. And his house was not left desolate; God remembered him again, even as He remembered Job. He had taken four children from him, He gave him again four children, and, curiously enough, in the same order—two boys and a girl and a boy—and the second family so like the flock in heaven that chance visitors, seeing on the parsonage walls the photographs of the latter at a time when the ages corresponded, would take them for the likenesses of the four then running about! Bodelschwingh is a man now turned sixty and his two elder sons are at college preparing for the ministry.

When Pastor von Bodelschwingh accepted the call, there were twenty-six epileptics at Eben-Ezer, male patients only, but three hundred patients of every description were urgently entreating to be admitted. These were of all classes of society, rich and poor, educated and illiterate, and of all ages; every stage of the trouble was represented among them, and the ever recurring cry in these requests for admission was not so much "Help me to get well again," as "Help me out of this despair,—I filled a position in life, I lost it; I had a home, it has grown afraid of me as of a man stricken and marked."

"This then is to be our object," said Bodelschwingh; "to give them back in a measure what they have lost. We will look after their health, but we will give them a sense of home here; we will give them a sense of

usefulness—they may work ; we will give them family life and a sense of community—they shall work for each other ; we will have a school for the children and church life for all. This place shall be their place, the church their church. Above all, they shall know they have a right to be ill here ; no one shall be afraid of them. Let their trembling souls be comforted, and lean upon us ; we will not fail them."

It has been the aim of Bethel for a quarter of a century to alleviate the infirmity, which has its victims with grim impartiality in the palace and in the cottage, by giving to each patient a sphere of usefulness. If he can only push a wheelbarrow, he shall have that wheelbarrow to push ! It is the common-sense of the treatment which so strikes the beholder—attempting the cure from within. They try to cure the *man* in him, reaching the body through the soul. And the patient is surrounded with a sense of fellowship : all are his friends there ; his poor little skiff has run into a haven of peace.

A new great house was already rising, which had room for about two hundred patients. But Bodelschwingh came with new ideas, giving quite a novel departure to the place ; and the house—a large three-storied building of the usual charitable-institution kind—really is out of keeping now with the general plan of the colony. It had been begun as an enlarged Eben-Ezer, and was named Bethel. It soon filled, male patients in the right wing and women patients in the left—it is the "Bethel" proper whence the name passed gradually to the whole colony ; for "Bethel" became the mother of many children, the central hive whence the whole apiary has emerged.

For it soon became apparent that it is a mistake to

herd these patients together under one roof, as you might any number of other sufferers in a great infirmary. The nature of their illness is against it; some are far gone in imbecility, others halfway towards it; others again are of a fairly sound mind; most are irritable, and it is difficult to keep the peace among them. Now, though Eben-Ezer was to retain the imbeciles, yet here there were men and women, children and adults, poor people and patients of the well-to-do classes, all collected in one house. It grew more and more difficult to manage such a conglomerate, there is too great a diversity of outward requirements and inward needs. Moreover, the question was not, to receive a number of patients, sooner or later to be replaced by others; it was not an ever-changing population, as in a sick-ward; but most of these sufferers came to stay, to be settled for good; and the question was, how to fit the unequal elements into a common homelife, to be carried on day after day, week after week, with its education, its discipline, its work and its play. They were to have family life, so they must be separated into congenial groups; and this principle obtaining—a principle growing out of Bethel's daily experience and daily need—they were parted according to sex, according to age, according to the stage of their illness, according to occupation. As these "families" formed, they emigrated—leaving Bethel for homes of their own; and in this way, a process as natural as the original peopling of the globe, the colony, counting now over a hundred houses, grew and grew. The Bethel of larger meaning may be set down at fully a hundred and fifty houses, including all the outlying offshoots and settlements gone out from her, not only of epileptics; while

Bethel, the mother—that three-storied building—continuing for a time as the first landing-place of all newcomers, is reserved now for the bulk of female patients, and sub-divided into fourteen stations.

This decentralising of course requires a much more complicated nursing staff, and more than nurses—attendants, guardians, teachers, friends—friends ever watchful, ever remembering their charges are labouring under grievous sickness, a sickness not always apparent, but always there; remembering that even trying "tempers" must be met with unruffled gentleness and with a pity greater than the most ungrateful outburst. Yet such pity with tenderest kindness must combine firmest rule—a wisdom knowing how to use restraint which shall not seem a punishing of the patient, but rather a kindly assistance in the hour of his weakness. Such attendants are not to be hired for money; and it was the gift of God to the growing colony that the twin tree, Sarepta, had been planted near it, quite independently, it is true, of its special need, yet likely to meet this special need most fully. From the house of deaconesses an ever-willing stream of true helpfulness has flowed for Bethel, while, at the same time, the training genius of the first "house-father" of Bethel proper produced a staff of male nurses—the nucleus whence the "Westphalian Brother-House," Nazareth, the complement of Sarepta, presently evolved.

The most striking feature of this colony of sick folk is its capacity for work; the place is a hive indeed, and as busy as a hive. And not merely work for occupation's sake, such as oakum-picking in a reformatory, but work of an elevating character, leaving with the patients a sense of usefulness, of still being wanted; scope for

ambition even—their own old aim and effort come back to them. For life brightens, even though the sunny ray be wanting, and gains in value just in proportion as we know we are *doing* something in this world—something worth doing, something for which somebody beyond ourselves will be the better. And even that other cause of content, that a man "pays his way," though it be a sick man's way, is a wondrous help along that way! It is true sympathy which understands and meets this want in a sick man's life.

Going in and out among the houses you come upon what is called Workshop Street. You enter the first house, paying a visit to the carpenters. You find some forty men here doing the joiner's work of the place. Last year alone seven new houses were added to the colony, the woodwork done by these patients, besides their meeting a never-ending demand for bedsteads, chairs, tables; and how often do they piece together the little house which even the most homeless wanderer at the last will have for his own! Most of these forty are joiners or carpenters by trade; but it is a favourite occupation, and often a gentleman patient, his mental capacity weakened, by preference chooses the carpentering. These carpenters form a family living in that house; its name is, Little Nazareth.* The head of this family is one of the brotherhood of Nazareth Deacon House—a trained carpenter, who is also a trained nurse and a trained evangelist.

These "house-fathers", as a rule are married men;

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* What fitter name for a Carpenters' Home than *Nazareth?* But this was appropriated already by the Deacon House, hence *Little* Nazareth.

a succeeding page will show their making and training. They form a remarkable institution. The house-father carpenter has the full management of Little Nazareth, business and all, his wife managing the household ; and to these two is committed the daily physical and spiritual welfare of the carpenter family. The pastors and medical men of the colony of course have their times of visitation, and know exactly what is going on. Each house-father has a staff of brother deacons at work among the patients, acting as foremen and sleeping in the night-wards.

There is a large dining-room, and a common sitting-room, furnished with books and games ; here you may find your joiners when work is done, unless they are taking recreation out of doors. Their work is not play-work ; they do their eight or nine hours daily, and true work is expected of them. Meal-times are the family gatherings—five times a day. The early cup of coffee at seven is followed by a more substantial breakfast a couple of hours later ; there is a wholesome, simple, and plentiful midday dinner, an afternoon cup of coffee, and supper at seven. At nine the men go to bed, rising between five and six. Before breakfast and after supper the house-father conducts family worship, not forgetting the reading of a psalm after dinner ; and if you happen to pass at the moment, you will know that the singing of a hymn is never omitted. There is a harmonium in every dining-room.

You enter another house—Peniel, the Tailors' Home—managed in the same way. The coats and trousers of the colony are made here, and the needful repairing done. Over against Peniel is Horeb, the Shoemakers' Home. If you pay a visit here on a Monday morning,

you find a mountain of invalid boots and shoes to be turned out hale by Saturday night. The next house is the Smithy, Gilgal; the next the Gardeners', Sharon, with a seedsman's shop, doing a flourishing business with the outer world by post.

There is bookbinding, there is printing; a bookselling establishment also, with a business connection all over the country. You may order any book you like, of wholesome literature; the printing and bookselling department is called Bethphage, the "house of figs," and books should be wholesome food. Several patients of the educated class are employed here. In the same "house of figs" there is a depôt for illuminated texts, large and small, Christmas and birthday cards, photographs, engravings, etc. The texts and cards are largely the work of talented patients; if any have a capability in any direction it is sure to be cultivated both for his own happiness and the welfare of his companions. You rarely enter this place without finding some customers who have walked out from Bielefeld, or some peasant-wife from the neighbourhood seeking a pretty acquisition for her cottage walls. Bethphage, quite apart from its moral objects, really pays, occupying and housing some twenty patients, and leaving a yearly surplus of several hundred pounds.

You continue your round, finding almost every trade represented; there are saddlers, there are basketmakers, and last, not least, there is the bakery. At Bethlehem ("house of bread") there is quite a model house-father, grown up with the place. He came as a baker's lad in the early years of the colony, and now is bread-master of Bethel; ever cheerful, with a cheerful house-mother who makes no trouble of anything, and a family of

olive branches, too, of his own, growing lustily about his table—they count the rolling years in the place by these never-failing babes. Bethlehem produces all the bread, cakes and buns the colony consumes; no small undertaking, for there are nearly three thousand mouths daily to fill. Over two hundred pounds' worth of flour is required every month. The hands employed in this establishment, if patients, of course are picked and chosen with some regard for those who eat the loaves; they are convalescents, not often troubled with fits. Indeed, that house-father, if you ask him, with not a little pride, and with a genial smile on his flour-powdered face, will show you a former patient who "got quite well here"; the bakehouse, according to him, being the finest sanatorium going, "especially for these poor fellows." So let a man make bread for others when he is in trouble; it may tend to his healing unawares.

There is quite a family of such, and in their off-hours you see them in their white bakers' clothes on a bench before the house, the "olive branches" toddling in and out among them, as happy a family as any in the colony. The master himself in his off-hours, as likely as not, may be found in the great kitchen garden weeding a bed of lettuces or planting out cabbages, and if you happen to pass at the moment with an "Always busy, House-father Baker?" he is sure to answer; "It's all in the day's work, bread or cabbages, and for the common good." In these few words you have the secret of these men. He makes nothing for his own pocket, nothing even for the little pockets he well might think of; he and his children are fed, housed, clothed, he making his loaves while looking after his family of patients. It is all one to him, be there five hundred loaves wanted or five thousand—it is for

the common good. Everything is managed well and thriftily in the colony at large, so in Bethlehem; and even the visitor not initiated in baking mysteries can understand the economy when he is shown three giant ovens, one above the other like berths in a ship, and heated with one fire running through a set of flues.

Besides bread-making there is brick-making, there is farming, there is also a grocery store—every house doing its own shopping, and keeping its own accounts; and there is the *brom kali* (bromide of potassium) office, sending this medicine—the one drug employed at Bethel—free of charge, and with "advice" to epileptics in ten different languages all over the globe. Not one applicant in ten can be received at Bethel; they take the most needy, and correspond with thousands besides.* These are the poor, whose claim is for Christ's sake. The great bulk are from the home provinces, but patients arrive from the ends of the earth, sometimes knowing two words only—*Bielefeld* and *Bodelschwingh*. A seven-year-old deaf-and dumb epileptic boy once came from Prussian Poland in this way, having a paper with these two words sewn on his coat. And Pastor von Bodelschwingh did not fail to turn this little event to good account. A petition went to Berlin setting forth that poor people could not afford to travel long distances with attending friends, yet surely it was taxing the travelling public to expect

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* The stress on Bethel has been lessening as other refuges for epileptics opened. Yet there is but one "Bethel," and hundreds always lying at her doors. A law is now coming into force in Germany, according to which, for the future, it is laid upon every province to provide for its own insane, idiots and epileptics. How this State provision will tell on the aims of Christian charity is a serious question.

them to look after such wayfarers—if these were taken with a fit, it was taxing that public sorely. Would Government grant a reduction of fares to all epileptics going to and from the colony? It was granted, and Bodelschwingh's growing family ever since has travelled on soldiers' tickets—that is, at one-third of the usual fare.

That *brom kali* office just mentioned yields another glimpse into Bodelschwingh's ways—ever merciful, ever watchful, ever seizing his opportunity. There was a chemist at Bielefeld who did not "get on." He knew all about his drugs, was an upright man, but he had no conciliating ways, and somehow his business came to grief. He had a wife and eight children, and went to Bodelschwingh saying they were starving. "Oh," says Bodelschwingh, "I happen to want a chemist,"—in that place a man in trouble appealing for help somehow always happens to be wanted,—"you could take charge of our *brom kali* depôt." The man was appointed; he, of course, settled in the colony, had a house given him, and his eight children now nowise look starving.

Now, how has this act of kindness repaid itself? Bromide is largely employed at the colony, the patients taking it as regularly as their daily bread to keep the fits under. Other remedies have been tried; Bethel, however, has always returned to the bromide as the one drug which avails. But when an ever-increasing number of epileptics lay waiting at her doors, and only the most helpless of even the poorest could be admitted for want of room, merciful Bethel made an effort to aid them by post, sending them the medicine with careful instructions as to their mode of living. For an astonishing number of out-patients the gain of this was twofold:

in the first place they were kept out of the hands of quacks, and in the second place they received the medicine in a purer form than obtainable at the ordinary chemist's—a great thing, considering the quantities a patient consumes, and the ill effects on some constitutions unless the bromide is of the purest. They are very careful at Bethel, even with the purified drug, making a study of every patient for the happy medium, so that the medicine may lessen the malady without producing what is known there as the "bromide face"—skin eruptions, and not only on the face.

It is, however, an expensive process to produce this bromide pure. It passes muster with the German pharmacopœia if it contains not more than 1½ per cent. of other salts. But Bethel sought improvement; and because of the enormous quantity required there, a Berlin company found it worth while to set up more elaborate chemical works in order to supply the colony with a preparation which contains only ¼ per cent. of deleterious substances. Bethel requires about half a ton of the drug in one month—three hundredweight for home consumption, the remainder for the ever-increasing host of out-patients. Within the last ten years, ninety thousand epileptics have thus been supplied in Germany alone! In many an instance, of course, this means the selfsame patient applying again and again; but the books also show that the recipients often are pastors or other public persons procuring the medicine for a number of afflicted ones; and thus, while from these figures alone the percentage cannot be accurately gauged, they yet give an idea how widespread the malady is. They also exhibit the vastness of the charity dispensed. Bethel, indeed, has out-patients in almost

every part of the world. Even a Sumatra chief once applied, and through her missionaries the healing hand of Bethel is busy also among the bound ones of the Dark Continent. The bromide can be had at cost price from the colony, but no regular charge is made for the medicine thus sent, and fully one-half of those out-patients had it quite free—it only needs a line from some minister, or other person of trust, to ensure that, and prevent abuse; others who can pay, send their shillings; wealthier folk, grateful for the service rendered, their half-sovereigns and sovereigns, with the result that, although a real charity is being shown to multitudes, yet this charity pays, leaving even a surplus for the general treasury. And not only has that chemist presiding over this vast dispensary thus been provided for, but clerks and bookkeepers are needed—of what class a future chapter will show, a rescued class—and several patients are at work there, preparing the consignments for postal transmission. It, of course, entails an enormous correspondence, for Bethel is in individual touch with very many of these out-patients. What letters are received! what experience is gained! and what a blessing is this establishment! Was not Bethel repaid, repaid grandly, for lending a helping hand to a man in trouble? But Bethel has made it her privilege to be the ever-ready comforter of "all that mourn."

CHAPTER IV

WALKS ABOUT BETHEL

"Your bodies a living sacrifice."

WHAT a gift of genius to find work for such a community! It is possible only because of the vastness of the undertaking. A smaller colony would be ten times as expensive, ten times as difficult to manage; and it is because of the *all-roundness* of the charity that every particular branch is so flourishing. Reciprocity is the great watchword there.

Far better than the bromide for the patients, indeed, is wholesome and steady occupation. Nothing is more hurtful to them than being left to their thoughts; they grow morbid and fretful, whereas work acts as a tonic, physically even, and morally still more. Even the poorest of them, joiner or tailor, has the feeling that he is not, or not altogether, an object of charity, but a man, though a stricken one, earning his wage. And if but nominal in some cases, yet for the greater part it *is* work, some of these patients actually having a certain wage allowed them—the poorer ones especially. They get it in the shape of pocket money, and often for the sake of helping their own poor relations. Whenever possible, a patient is employed according to the occupation he followed before the malady overtook him. Indeed, most of them stubbornly cling to this link with their

past. It has been found almost hopeless to teach them any new trade, no doubt because of a feeling on their part they may after all get well again, at least well enough to return to the world; and they would like to return, not as strangers, to the place which knew them.

Out-of-door labour, of course, is the most conducive to their wellbeing, and a natural occupation with very many of the men. Farming, therefore, almost from the first, has been a recognised pursuit at Bethel. As you pass on through Workshop Street, past the home farm where the "Field-marshal" Steinkamp has his little room, over against the hayloft, with some thirty or forty head of milch cows beneath him, and past the gardens where Sharon cultivates her kitchen stuff and flowers and seeds, you follow a winding road lined with buildings, all belonging to the colony—pretty little houses, where many of the working staff live; and ascending towards the uplands, fields all about you, and meadows and woods and the hill-chains beyond, you reach, about a mile from the centre of the colony, the farm, Hebron. This farm was acquired in 1879. It was the property of a drunken peasant whose wife and children had been taken in at Bethel to be safe from his ill-usage; and the poor woman, far gone in consumption, had died there. It is noteworthy that many of the houses gradually joined to the colony before passing into its hands were either public-houses or the neglected homes of drunkards; the area now covered by Bethel, some four hundred acres, being in the precincts of a manufacturing town (Bielefeld) with a reputation for socialism. Thus Bethel, by extending its borders, has actually lessened

the enemy's camp—the angel of mercy dislodging the devil of drink, and turning a field of strife into a garden of peace.

The farm in question formerly went by the name of "Chicken Farm," because of a tribute of barn fowl levied of old by the Counts of the Sparrenburg, the turreted castle of which, with the home colony of Bethel at its foot, offers a fine view as seen from here. It was re-christened Hebron, and is quite a model farm. There are nearly a hundred patients employed here ; and since work is harder than on any of the other farms, much uncultivated soil being gradually reclaimed, it is always the strongest among the Bethelites who are drafted off to this "station"—that is to say, those who are tolerably well between their attacks, or do not have them often. The health bill at Hebron is among the best of the colony, yet here also at times there is trouble, patients requiring to be isolated, and even put under restraint in the "cell." Outbursts of temporary insanity are not rare.

There is a pretty story how Hebron came by a house-father. He was the son of a rich Westphalian peasant, and heir to a large property. There is a real aristocracy among this peasantry, of long descent—high-minded folk, and of as thorough breeding as any nobility. This man had a younger brother, whom he loved, but who was epileptic ; and the two youths together one day arrived at Bethel, the elder coming with the younger to tend him—to be his brother indeed. Of course he was allowed to stay. The invalid grew worse, and after a few years the afflicted soul laid down its worn-out shell. He was buried in the little cemetery, but the elder brother did not then shake off the dust of Bethel from

his feet. Hale and strong, and heir to a life of this world's good things, he had learned at Bethel to choose the better part. He offered to stay for good, join the brotherhood, and be ready for any service. He had gone through the usual training of sick-nursing while attending on his brother. He was a born farmer and of the right stuff altogether.

Now Hebron with its eighty acres wanted a house-father who knew all about farming ; and a house-father must have a house-mother by his side. This young man had loved a girl, and was betrothed to her, she being the daughter of another of these peasant lords. At first she did not approve of her lover's "whims" : it was all very well that he had been good to his own brother, but to go and be "brother" to everybody else—any ailing creature that might need him—was too much for her. Besides, he must give up his prospects, and she had intended to be a peasantess in state, governing her dairy and presiding over her linen chests, with all implied therein of dignity and housewifely glory. No, she was going to jilt him rather than say yes to this. So be it : he was going to throw in his lot with Bethel, for there was a love passing the love of woman constraining him. Now she had a true, tender heart, this youthful peasant princess ; and, as he would not give in, she gave in : love being strong, it *can* give in, even at a loss sometimes. Only it turned all to her gain, and there is not a statelier peasant-dame now, far and wide. Of course they gave up their earthly claims, as far as entering into possession was concerned—there was a third brother at the ancient homestead who could "succeed." This young man and his maiden true were married by Bodelschwingh on the "deel" (threshing-floor) of the ancestral farm, according

to Westphalian peasant custom since time immemorial. And a comely couple they were.

Their own families, though good folk, at first stood aghast; but, after all, they failed not to grace the wedding, and even the young man's favourite sister, who had been most staggered by these "whims"—who ever heard of a Westphalian so slighting his own good peasant prospects?—relented sweetly, and presented Hebron, by way of a wedding present, with her own primest cow. It was, indeed, a giving up of "prospects," and a sacrifice quite as great, as regards any sense of position and wealth and dignity, as if an eldest son of English nobleman or country squire, on coming of age, gave up his rights.

The pair thus were installed at Hebron, and it is beautiful to see how they manage this farm with the same pride as though it were their very own. In her domain, dairy or kitchen, everything is spick and span; and for his part, the fields all about and the thriving cattle speak for it. It is the farm of their heart, if not of their pocket. And over and above the farm they have taken to their hearts the hundred epileptics, teaching them to be good farm labourers, and doing their best by them in any way they can. There is the same home-life at Hebron as there is at the carpenters', or in any of the houses. Hebron has a beautiful dining-room, low-ceiled, and with plenty of casements, a farmhouse room of truest style, and as clean as a young lady's boudoir, Mrs. Bargholz—why should she not be named here?—looking after everybody's comfort, and ruling her women-folk to the credit of the place. It is, indeed, the farm of their heart, if not of their pocket.

Concerning that pocket, it may interest, almost startle,

the English reader to hear what these people actually do get. These Nazareth brothers, house-fathers and all, never have a penny of salary; they get pocket-money according to their need. A married house-father, such as the one we are speaking of, has out of the general Nazareth fund about twenty pounds a year to clothe himself and his wife; if there are any children, there is an addition according to the number of children. For the rest, they do not need any money; they are fed with the household they have adopted, and which has adopted them. If they are ill, why, Bethel has half-a-dozen doctors, and Sarepta hundreds of nursing sisters; no one is left uncared for. When they get old, Bethel will still provide for her workers, for Bethel is a commonwealth, and no man, once having entered that service of love, need have any care for himself. It is a lovely arrangement, and only a man like Bodelschwingh could have devised it;—or, if others could have devised it, it is only one like him, so possessed of the *charisma* of service, that could so inspire every other worker about him with the perfect beauty of self-surrender. These people—and we give this just as an instance, there are others like them in the colony—work for the place with as jealous an eye for its advantage as if it were a hundred times their own. And, because of this, owners indeed they are while they live. Who ever would turn out such a house-father? His very children will inherit the blessing, for Bethel is a commonwealth.

In certain respects Mr. and Mrs. Bargholz do differ from other "house-parents." There is an air of wealth about them; their children will come in for the father's and mother's share of those Westphalian "prospects," and their own people are good meantime to Hebron. A

the harvest season waggonsful arrive, as though Hebron had stepped into the rights the heir to the Bargholz's gave up on becoming a brother and house-father. So Hebron is well off.

One afternoon Pastor and Mrs. von Bodelschwingh, with their family and a number of visitors, had announced themselves at Hebron, by telephone, for an afternoon cup of coffee. We sallied out through the fields, and, lo and behold, Mrs. Bargholz had bethought herself of her housewifely pride, receiving us with stately dignity, all smiles and blushes and curtseys, and having set a table with her own china and silver—her family see to that—and with cakes and cream abounding. Call her a farmer's wife and a peasantess! She has an artless dignity about her, as to the manner born. It was a pleasant afternoon, and one came away not only delighted, but having gained a new insight. She has two little girls of her own, and sees to their being well educated.

There are considerable brickfields at Hebron, turning out four millions of bricks a year, for home use partly, but also for business. These brickfields are a rising concern, and a paying concern, as anybody can understand. The bricks being made with machinery—the management of which cannot be entrusted to epileptics—are the work of men from the "Labour Colony," of which anon; but the Hebronites dig the clay and bring it to the spot by means of little trucks on rails. When the soil can no longer be worked for clay, it has to be brought into use for grazing land; besides, there is a great deal of neglected forest land and waste heath-country round about, which these patients by diligent labour render productive. So life is busy at Hebron.

There is a fine show of milch cows, the farm selling about five hundred pounds' worth of milk yearly; there are fowls and pigs, a number of horses, too, for use in the brickworks when there is no ploughing; also for taking the milk-carts about the colony.

This is how Bethel does much of its work. Hebron, farm and brickfields, costs the general treasury not a farthing, for it amply keeps itself, its hundred mouths and all, even with a surplus. It is a model farm, and like Bethel itself, a city set on a hill. Everything is so very ideal about Bethel, yet so very practical. Such a colony never could be imitated; that is the beauty of it, and its mark of the divine. Yet you may learn of Bethel!

To show the dark side of the picture, that very afternoon we had so pleasant a cup of coffee, the pastor was called downstairs to speak to a poor fellow who had had bad fits lately, and had been put under restraint, having been violent, and threatening to lay hands on himself. A few days afterwards as the foundation-stone was being laid for a house to receive temporarily such as he —a lunatic asylum, with its walls of isolation thoughtfully hidden from the patient's eye by shrubberies—that same fellow, in his right mind now, stood by the side of the pastor, who spoke to him. "You didn't mean it, Peter," says the pastor, with that look of compassion which is hardly ever out of his eyes. "No," says Peter, "only I could not help it." "Well," says the pastor, "here, you see, we are building a house, where you will never feel shut up, but only taken care of; and when that evil spirit takes you, you must just always tell us, and for a while come here."

A sister-farm of Hebron goes by the name of Mamre,

and some of us walked across that evening to have a talk with the house-mother there. Mamre, related in character to Hebron, yet altogether on a more modest scale, has charge of about seventy patients, employed similarly to those at Hebron. The house-father there had been a simple farm-labourer, a mere ploughman, before offering for service at Bethel. He has a splendid wife, and the legend of their loves has it that she disappeared from their native village when he quitted the plough for Bethel, thinking she was no wise good enough for him. It turned out afterwards that he had thought he was not good enough for her; and, judging by appearance, you would have said so too, appearances often leaving you ignorant of riches and graces unseen. She entered the service of a Dutch family, with whom she travelled as lady's maid. But if you want a talk with a *lady*, go and see Mrs. Engelmann, though you may find her in her kitchen with both her arms in a trough mixing salad for her large family. She evidently has had an education in her travels, and she has the education which comes from within. Taking a chair, one watched her proceedings; the subject of conversation was handy.

"To think of the mere feeding of these numbers"—she had been saying they were peeling a hundredweight and more of potatoes daily—"the peeling is one thing, but to be sure of your potatoes always is another thing! It is marvellous."

"No, not marvellous," said she, looking up with her calm light-blue eyes, her pleasant common-sense face—"not marvellous; it is very natural: while we have *him* to pray for us (meaning Bodelschwingh) never a screw will fall out of its place, never a wheel come to a standstill in this machinery."

"But it is hard work for you, and with such patients!"

"Yes, hard work; we are up at four and busy till night—yet not hard. You see," she said, "you have got to put your heart into it. There is one thing, you soon know your fitness if you come to try your hand here. There are only two attitudes you can assume towards this work,—you are either hot to it, or cold to it, and you know which before a week is out; and unless you *are* hot, right hot with the something burning within you, you will be running away fast enough; if need be, with *Holz-schuhen*."

Whether with "wooden shoes" one runs the more quickly, she left unexplained; but her meaning was patent—love only keeps these folk to their post. We had supper with them, a humble repast, the patients here being of a poorer sort altogether. They came in from the fields in their working blouses, a brother presiding at each table. Grace having been said they fell to with a will. The house-father came in late, for there had been a home bringing of hay—a simple unassuming man, shorter than his wife, and certainly no beauty to behold. Yet you need give but one look in his face, and you see a beauty unmistakable; there is that written in his countenance, which lets you know at a glance he is a Christian. It is strange how one knows that at first sight, with some people—that chastened look glorifying even the homeliest features. We shook hands—his were hard and knotty—and sat down; he had not much to say. But he conducted a little evening service like a priest of the sanctuary.

"How came he to choose this life?" He was not quick with an answer, the wife answering for him:

"It was because of his *ernsten Sinn*,"—because of his unworldly mind—said she quietly, as though it were the most natural thing for a man to turn his face from the things of this world for the serving of Christ's poor. Possibly they never heard of "consecration," for they are simple folk; but theirs is the consecrated life, the "living sacrifice," the "reasonable service" of which Paul speaks.

They also have some rosy, flaxen-haired children (there is the true Saxon type among these folk of the Ravensberger Land), growing up among these poor. The children of the colony are particularly thriving, as though to gainsay the apprehensions of those who say it is "bad" to be about epileptic patients. After supper the industrious house-mother showed us over her domain; and seeing her linen closet, a big room, the walls all covered with pigeon-holes, one for each man with his weekly linen all ready, it being Friday evening; and being shown the mendings and washings all done by her and her two or three young servants—think of the socks only which these men wear into holes—one wondered again. What paid labour could do this? But there is a love which never faileth and before which mountains yield. We are told that simple house-father prays with his wife for their epileptics every day, and for each troubled one individually. This is the unseen strength.

We went home, the sinking sun casting a glow over the pretty country, so peaceful despite all the suffering gathered there. We had had talk with the patients as they sat or stood in groups about the yard after supper, and were carrying away an impression that probably they are happier now than ever they were in their lives

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before. They tell you they have got to work, but they always add, "It is good for us"; and there is an air of fellowship about them which is a power in itself. Strange that longing for fellowship, as though it were easing our own burden to know there are others like us! But here sympathy comes in, saying, I am looking upon thy burden as though it were mine. There must be a deep meaning underlying this God-implanted need, else One would not have spoken of "treading the winepress alone." And he is truly man who truly shares.

On our way we passed a little homestead belonging to Mamre, where a number of youths are housed with two brothers—boys of fifteen and sixteen, who, having left school, are now being initiated into the mysteries of farming. They were just singing their evening hymn, their "Abide with us" ringing over the meadows. But as we neared Bethel the hand of evening was opening doors everywhere. Young men were out playing at nine-pins—you heard the thud and fall the more clearly as sounds of work were hushed; and you met them in groups, the carpenters, the tailors, the shoemakers, each with a towel slung across his shoulders going out to the baths for a plunge or douche.

Let us go back to Bethel, the mother-hive, managed by Sister Louise. There are only women now in that large building—nearly two hundred, of all ages, from the schoolgirl upward. Only about one-third of the patients are of the weaker sex, for the simple reason that women can be more easily managed at home. There are fourteen "stations" in Bethel House; for here also, though under one roof, the family system prevails. Each dozen or so of girls or women, parted from the rest, form a

"station," having their own dormitory, their work and sitting-room ; meals only are in common. Work for the women patients, of course, is less varied ; it consists in household work, needlework, gardening. Go into the sewing classes, and you find some sixty or seventy of the girls in four rooms busily engaged round a table, at the head of which is a deaconess ; here garments are made and clothes mended, not only for their own large family, they also help their neighbours—Nazareth, for instance, with its many boy patients and unmarried brothers. And there is singing and reading aloud while the work goes on. In another room you find great baskets full of socks and stockings to be turned out again for wear. And then Bethel has her own large kitchen garden, having six hundred mouths to cook for daily, some of the neighbouring "families"—such as the Nazareth boys and men—coming in for their dinner, or dinners are sent out. Thus Bethel House keeps up its position of "mother," and many of its inmates are occupied in this department. Five times a day the men and boys come streaming in, two or three hundred of them ; they have a separate entrance into a large dining-hall on the ground floor, not mixing at all with the Bethel patients. You can hardly watch a meal when such numbers meet without being a witness to their affliction. There is a beautiful stained-glass window in this hall, the gift of a thoughtful friend. It represents Peter sinking in the waves but upheld by his Lord ; and surely there is a silent help passing from that window into the hearts of some as they sit there at meat, a strengthening better than of earthly food. This hall, used at meal times only, registers about three thousand fits in the course of a year.

The great kitchen of Bethel House, of course, requires

a goodly provision of garden produce; and the girls and women, in the intervals of their sewing and cooking, are taken to the fields; there is weeding to be done, or hoeing, or the gathering-in of vegetables, and it is a pretty sight to see them—always with a white-capped deaconess in their midst—doing such work as they can on their own extensive domain. And possibly you may find "Field-marshal" Steinkamp out inspecting their work. Bethel also has large wash-houses, for much weekly washing has to be done: there also her women and girls find work. It is a laundry with every appliance, and a couple of deaconesses always there, fellow workers with the patients. This laundry, if a busy place, would seem a happy place; at least you hardly ever pass without hearing hymn or song.

And then Bethel has regular schoolrooms for girls under fifteen; you find them in three classes, four hours daily, taught by deaconesses. The work done, of course, is not fully equal to the curriculum of the national schools; the scholars are too unequal in mental capacity, and also in previous management; but it is a pleasant hour you would spend in any of these class-rooms, especially if you happen to chance on an "examination," combining, say, the story of Noah's ark with a lesson in arithmetic, and see the little fingers come up so eagerly announcing the ready answer. The boys are similarly taught—at Nazareth—religious instruction, history, geography, ciphering, etc. But in all these class-rooms you see the familiar couch—it is never wanting in any room, any workshop you enter, and one of the most beautiful things to witness is the mutual assistance rendered by these afflicted ones to each other. They never wait for the brother or sister to lift the stricken form if they can do

so. When first the question was mooted to collect epileptic patients in a common home, fears were expressed that thereby, through fright, the trouble would be increased—an epileptic, of course, having no idea of the nature of an attack, unless he sees it in others, and the shock, it was thought, might induce worse things in himself. But this fear has turned out to be quite groundless: possibly that sense of fellowship is the neutralising agent. There seems to be something soothing in the very knowledge that they are surrounded by fellows in grief and are no longer the shunned exception; and so far from taking fright at each others' attacks, they run to help one another. The most common seizure is the mere giddiness, the sudden unconscious slipping to the ground, or falling back in a chair; but even in a bad fit, arms are about the falling one directly—the helpful arms of his own companions. They know exactly what to do to prevent him biting his tongue or hurting himself otherwise; even the little children know, and do it so tenderly, supporting their sinking comrade till stronger hands are near.

You get a beautiful glimpse of this fellowship if you will station yourself outside their church on a Sunday, say half an hour before service; and having done so once, you will not miss it again on any Sunday during your stay. They arrive in batches, streaming up the hill, some headed by brother or sister, but many filing up by themselves, by twos and threes, and in little groups. And then only you get a full impression what a stricken company they are. There is scarcely one but the malady has touched his bodily frame,—you see it in their faces, you see it in their bodies, afflicted in many ways. They *are* cross-bearers! But how beautifully they help one

another up that hill!—leading one another, leaning on one another—it is impossible to witness it and go away unmoved. "Bear ye one another's burden"—unconsciously they act upon it. Is not such mutual helpfulness in very deed the prayer of which the apostle tells us that by praying for another we shall ourselves be healed?

On the ground floor of Bethel, till quite lately, sixty epileptic little girls were housed, perhaps one-fourth of them unable to use their limbs, perhaps one-half unable to speak, all of them more or less imbecile, some hopelessly so. These are "the least of them." The rooms they occupied were scarcely spacious enough for half the number, but who could refuse admittance to such helpless ones when they knocked at Bethel's gates? It is for these that a new house has been built, opened at the Jubilee and paid for by thank-offering pennies. The latest acquisition, it is the most beautiful of all Bethel homes; and rightly so, says Pastor von Bodelschwingh, for it is destined to receive the most afflicted of these children of grief. Yet children of love withal,—it needs only one look into the face of Sister Mary, who is mothering this flock, to be sure of this. How proud she is of them, proud because they need her so; and to tend imbecile children is no light thing. Think only of cleanliness! But Sister Mary has a large heart, and she and her helpers spend a life of happiness—she said so—bearing the burden of these little ones. There are some blind among them, some deaf and dumb, some who for intelligence never saw one ray of light. But some can play, and some can sing, and they sing their little hymns to the Shepherd of even this flock. The new house is named "Little Bethel," and within a few months of the opening the

number has increased from sixty to nearly a hundred. Bethel itself has rapidly filled up. There are so many always waiting for leave to come!

Sister Louise of Bethel has a brother, one of those Ravensberger friends; he owns a farm not many miles distant, and he and his wife take a special interest in Bethel. Again and again in summer-time an invitation is sent to the Bethel girls — "girls" in general meaning female patients; they are such children, and comparatively few reach over thirty—to come out for an afternoon feast in his orchards. And he sends waggons to bring his guests, to whom such outings are a rare delight—all they can have of such recreation; they cannot go holiday-making like the rest of us!

Sister Louise's brother is not the only one who does this. The good peasant folk round about vie with each other in showing this love to the epileptics, and some have been known to add to the invitation the special request, *Send us the most afflicted!* They are not afraid of them; they think only of the pleasure they would like to give to this band of misery. Is not this beautiful? Who among ourselves, having a large house or a garden, would open it to such visitors? Should we not say, we would like to do so, but there are such sights to be dreaded; we pity them, but we cannot risk such visions of distress in our own houses? There is such a look too about these patients—for epilepsy is *not* a beautifier of the human face divine, and there *is* much about them repulsive—should we not say it would really be too much for us, we'll send them a contribution? These peasant folk then are before us—"*Send us the most miserable?*" And out they go, and there is singing, and there are games and cherryfeasts and tables set, and

hosts in their Sunday best to honour these guests, and there is happiness. And there is One among them Whom they see not—"*Ye have done it unto the least of these, ye have done it unto Me.*"

As you go up the valley, leaving Bethel and Little Bethel behind you, you nowise leave the colony — there are some forty Houses in all, that is, homes of epileptics —nearly a hundred buildings. We cannot enter them all with our pen, though we have done so with personal interest, visiting these patients by turn at meals, at work, at play, whenever one could get near them. At the far end of the colony in this direction there is a homestead, Carmel, occupied by Sister Minna, who has a taste for farming. Her patients—not by any means bright ones—do washing, knitting, sewing, as womenfolk ought; but they also work on the farm, the heavier part, actual field-labour, being done for them by the male patients of Bethsaida, a station close by. A visit to these "girls" on a summer afternoon, and taking in at a glance the pretty little farm, leaves one with a happy feeling that such a pleasant retreat should be provided for these troubled ones. It is a "women" station (for adults, that is); but Sister Minna has carried off to her rustic bower two of the epileptic half-imbecile little girls — one of them a dumb child, but engaging enough — to have something to pet, as she tells visitors.

We have not yet been to the "Silly Valley." The colony is strewn about two valleys, meeting at an angle, and having the hill with the church between them. The "Silly Valley" is but a narrow cut, separating the twin hills. It has been so named, popularly, because so many of the clouded intellects are housed there; but

it is "Happy Valley" now, for the Love going in and out at Bethel made it her special abode. Eben-Ezer is in this valley, and Zoar, and other homes of this kind. But there are one or two houses among them which should be classified differently, such as the epileptic ladies' home—Bethany. Here, patients of the upper classes are received. Bethany consists of two houses with their own pleasant garden between: the one house for "first-class" patients, the other for "second-class"; they pay £50 or £100 yearly, with this difference, that those of the first-class have a room to themselves, and every two or three patients a sister between them. Bethany, especially of the first class, is all a ladies' home should be—sitting-rooms with cosy corners, pretty tables, sofas, books, photographs and everything—pianos and a harmonium, of course. There is a large, airy dining-room, both classes meeting at meals, no difference in food being made. The private rooms of the patients are prettily furnished and decorated with their own little knick-knacks.

There are some forty patients at Bethany, and the ruling genius, the head sister, is a character. She is the widow of a Prussian General, a lady of rank and wealth, over sixty years of age now, and looking older, but, as she herself says, "as tough as shoe-leather." Her history is the school in which she was trained. Her husband, thrown from his horse, grew imbecile and she had the nursing of him for seven years, after which she nursed a relative in similar trouble; and now, having no children of her own, she has dedicated the remainder of her life to Bethel—"Sister Laura" now, but her girls call her "Grannie." She is the regular General among her flock, but a loving one, upholding

strict discipline with the funniest airs of command. Grannie is a great favourite.

An English girl from Capetown was recently brought there, not knowing anything of German. After a week or so she had picked up a phrase, she had heard it so often. "I am very happy here," she said, "though it is all so strange to me in this strange country; the sisters are so kind, and I know a German word now—*Mein Liebling!*" It says something for a place, does it not, that "My Darling" should be the first words a stranger from a far country is sure to begin upon. What a boon such a house is! That Cape girl came a long way: it was the only house of the kind her friends ever heard of.

Epileptic patients of the wealthier classes, especially girls, can be treated in their own homes; they can at least be kept from harm, and their own people surely would be kind to them. But it often is a mistaken kindness—a kindness which lets them have their own way; the firm hand is wanting. Such patients are far better in a home of love like this; they have a better chance of recovery there, a chance, at least, of not getting worse, which sometimes is all they can hope for. Among the Bethany girls quite a number are but in their teens, and they are receiving such education as their capabilities admit of—languages, music, drawing, reading. For the sisters in that house, though nursing sisters, are women of culture, are ladies. That Cape girl, for instance, has a charming attendant, one she fell in love with directly, a clergyman's daughter, herself quite young, of a cultivated mind and, what is better, evidently of a cultivated heart. It was she who taught that young stranger her first German lesson—*Mein*

Liebling. Even the 'ologies can be studied at Bethany, under these nursing sisters, if any patient has a turn that way. Needlework, too, is done diligently, either for the poor or for missions. And if you happen to drop in of a morning, you may come upon some of these girls, sitting round their "General" and shelling peas or something of that sort. The busy wholesome life is their medicine and discipline; they, too, if cured at all, are cured from within. Once a week, in a house like this, there is *Familien-abend*, or, as we should say here, an "At Home." Any visitors about are invited, one of the pastors and his wife come to preside, there is a tea-supper and a pleasant evening.

A little further up this valley there is Bethesda, a similar institution for ladies, not epileptic, but of "weak nerves"; ladies old and young, the better for a little supervision and regular living. They are all of good position, of rank often, ladies who never had anything particular to do, and never had their wills trained. It is bodily treatment and soul strengthening they are here for; they get it, and seem happy.

The valley ends where these ladies of weak nerves might end if not taken in hand in time; Magdala is the terminus of this valley—a female lunatic asylum. It was, in the first instance, the needs of the colony which led to this development, a place of refuge being required for women epileptics under temporary insanity. But Pastor von Bodelschwingh has an idea that the Church, as a Church, has a duty towards the insane, and since asylums for lunacy are provided by the municipalities, he will, at least, have this Bethel do its Christian part, though it be but on a small scale. This house has twenty regular patients, mostly incurables, and it is managed by

deaconesses fitted for the work, one of the medical men of the colony being a specialist in diseases of the mind. A lunatic asylum for male patients, as already mentioned, is in course of erection ; it is planned for about thirty to forty patients, and is to be called Moriah.

The companion house to Bethany, for gentlemen, is Hermon, in the midst of the beech wood on the hill, over against the church. Pastor Schmidt and his wife are house-parents here. It is a large house, having patients of all ages, youths and men. These gentlemen are all busy according to their capacities, some as clerks in the offices, some in the library—that is at Bethphage, with its several departments—some doing postman's work about the colony, or carpentering, or gardening. They are tended by brothers, as Bethany is by sisters. They have their books, they have music, they have games. You find men there of many nationalities ; for nowhere on the globe are there homes like these for men thus stricken.

Bethel, though outwardly a sad gathering of human misery, is nevertheless a college where sick folk may graduate. It is *beauty for ashes*, even in their grievous affliction, the hand of love leading them step by step to the submission which is peace.

CHAPTER V

MORE WALKS ABOUT BETHEL

"Out of the mouth of babes Thou hast perfected praise."

IT is a sight to see Pastor von Bodelschwingh among his idiots—his children, as he calls them by preference. How they cling to his love! Men, women, boys, girls, in four different houses. Bethel has a large idiot colony,—nearly one-third of her numbers must be counted imbecile; many arrive such, others gradually become such. If epileptics were taken in hand in time—that is, if there were enough "Bethels" to take them in,—this need not be; not more than five per cent. need sink away into that outer darkness.

How strange that, with clouded intellects—among these epileptics, at least—the religious faculty often is the one thing left! They know their hymns and their Bible verses when all else is gone. And it is cultivated. It seems as if the deteriorating effects of this terrible malady troubled the mind rather than the soul. The affections, for instance, are left, when thought and reflection are almost gone; gratitude is left—they do know when you are kind to them; the spiritual faculty is left,—enough, at least, to be cultivated. There was the head-sister's birthday—"Auntie," they call her—at the home for women idiots, so there was coffee and cakes, and Pastor von Bodelschwingh and his wife were invited.

This house has locked doors, and is walled in, to warn off curious strangers; but, by a happy chance, one was of the company. There are about sixty patients in that house—poor, helpless things, not an unclouded mind among them! But Bodelschwingh began talking to them (the house is called Siloam): "Children, can you tell me about Siloam?" None but foolish answers. "Listen, children!" and he read to them and talked to them about the pool and the blind man; and they, some of them, at least, presently understood that Jesus sent the blind man thither to get eyes. "What sort of eyes, children?" And a poor imbecile girl actually cried back, "*Herzens-augen!*" "Yes, *Herzens-augen*," says Bodelschwingh; "and *stille Herzen*—hearts that give up fretting and quarrelling." And, somehow, he got them to understand that "Herzens-augen" (*eyes of the heart*) to see Jesus with; and "stille Herzen," the stillness within, was the one thing wanted of them; and, however much or little they understood, these two words were left with them like two lights shining on their darkness. No sermon could have impressed one more—the loving preacher, the imbecile flock, the power of love making itself understood.

On another occasion there was a similar gathering at the same house. Pastor Stürmer had arranged it: he is Bodelschwingh's coadjutor for Bethel, on whom the captainship of the epileptic colony long has devolved, there being two other pastoral appointments besides, one for Sarepta, and one for Nazareth. Stürmer was Bodelschwingh's friend before either of them came to this work. He was his curate, and, indeed, an inmate of his manse when the four little children died; and there is nothing which knits men more closely than a great

sorrow gone through together. If we were asked to characterise Stürmer, we should do it with the one word—self-effacement. He is the very last to make a "hero" of Bodelschwingh; but unconsciously he is setting him forth, and it is a treat at any time to get him on this topic. But the thing to be noted is, that although his is an independent position, the several pastors holding appointment under a committee, and although he most certainly goes his own way, he yet *is* the captain he is, because so fully impregnated with the spirit of his general—more truly said of his friend. It is, more or less, the same with all these workers: once appointed they go their own way, only—it is Bodelschwingh's way. He truly is their chief, yet not so much a ruler as an *influence*, and his fellow-workers grow like him; they cannot help it. There is an educating spirit pervading this colony, the spirit of not seeking one's own. The wondrous thing in this chief is that magnetic power in him attracting the right workers; they are never looked for, never sought; they come, they are there; they do their own part as free agents almost, he so completely trusting them, yet his spirit is in their every act. It comes to this, that Christian genius is a spiritual force, ever begetting, ever imbuing; and this is the working secret of this strangely constituted colony, the true characteristic of which is found in the text, "He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve." They are all servants there, from Bodelschwingh to the youngest brother. If there were a few more colonies like it, there would be no social question left.

Stürmer, then, is working pastor of the Bethel proper. The patients never think of going to Bodelschwingh direct; but with all their little griefs, with their every

need, bodily or spiritual, real or imaginary, they have free access to Stürmer any hour of the day; and though he be in the midst of his heavy office work—all the Bethel accounts, the Bethel correspondence going through his hands—how patiently he listens to their troubles, how lovingly he enters into their need! He is the faithful shepherd of this flock, and if their troubled souls find peace, it is largely due to this pastor's gentle and indefatigable ministrations.

So Pastor Stürmer, according to his frequent habit, was arranging that afternoon gathering at Siloam: He read them a story—it was a Christmas tale, all about dying, curiously enough; but anything about death and dying has a strange fascination for these epileptics. One could not tell how much they took in of the reading; but the pastor kept their attention wonderfully, stopping every few lines wanting a text from them or the verse of some hymn fitting his subject, and they always gave the right one, he setting the keynote, as it were, with a leading word, and after they had repeated it once or twice in chorus, it was sung. Their eyes simply were riveted on the pastor, whose very voice upon occasion is an echo of Bodelschwingh's.

The story having told about Christmas and the Babe in the manger, went on to tell how one Christmas day a kind mother died, leaving her little ones orphaned. "This is very sad," says the pastor, "but it would not be right to go sorrowing always; the Christian must be joyful again, knowing it is the Lord,—for why?" And pat came the answer—

> "Why should I go sadly weeping?
> If bereft, Christ is left,
> He all joy is keeping." *

* "Warum sollt' ich mich denn grämen."—Paul Gerhard's hymn.

What better answer could even the wisest of us have given? One simply wondered and went home in silence. The memory for hymns they have learned seems about all now left to them. But were they not faithful with that one talent—shall He not be satisfied with these children? Even as that hymn was being said there was a terrible bang, one of them falling forward, knocking her head against the table. It created no disturbance: the girls to the right and left of her lifted her up in their arms—even the idiots do it so tenderly, stroking the sufferer's face: not that this is any use in a fit, but yet! but yet! They are so responsive to affection, these poor things; they crowd round you for barest sign of it; they understand that universal language of which the "*Greatest Thing*" speaks. You have but to press their hand, stroke their cheeks, and a wonderful gleam of light passes over their faces,—yes, Jove is left!

It is not easy to be still at Siloam, and they certainly do a lot of quarrelling these poor fretful things—it is part of their infirmity—the sisters have much ado to keep *this* flock still. But even they learn a little of that stillness, acquire it by degrees; it is so deeply imbedded in their environment, how can they but learn a little? and what a blessed change for some of them from the homes they knew before Bethel opened her arms to their distress! There is much hymn singing at Siloam: the sister raises the song, and they follow, follow. It is thus their way Home is made easy—it is not so very long a way for any of them, andt hen the night will vanish, the morning break.

A number of them are quite capable of being set to work; they do some knitting, not very beautiful, but

still they do it. To whom little is given, of them little will be asked.

Some of them go to church, and they do sit still. Whether they take in much or little of the service there is at least the beautiful singing and the voice of their own Pastor von Bodelschwingh, whom they all love—such as they *can* love—and who has such a simple way of talking to his flock from the pulpit; or of Pastor Stürmer or another, it makes little difference to them; yet it is a soothing influence, and who shall say it is in vain? They at least recognise the name of Jesus when they hear it, and who shall say that is vain? The Great Shepherd does not forsake these troubled ones in their hour of darkness. They tell you the story of one who had brain fever as a child, became epileptic, and lost all mental powers. For eighteen years they had him, and for eighteen years he sat shaking his head to and fro; and almost the one thing that passed his lips, and this fifty times a day, was a baby song his mother had taught him—"Because the Lord's dear lamb I be, He will ever care for me"—the one thing he remembered; it clung to him, and with this he died. Who shall say this is vain?

The male patients of this class are at Eben-Ezer, the house where a quarter of a century ago a beginning was made with four. There are over fifty there now, hopelessly shattered, physically and mentally. Yet there are degrees even here. You mostly find them just wandering in and out of the house and about the yard; when you go in, there is a troop about you directly, so anxious to shake hands. Some tell you they are waiting for letters. Some are occupied peeling potatoes—they do it neatly enough—or on cleaning days busy with broom

and bucket. In the rooms they are divided by tens or so, each room under a brother who has the care of them, and sleeps in the night ward.

We dropped in one Saturday, and going from room to room found one poor fellow, he might be about twenty years of age, cleaning the boots of the "station"—there was quite a basketful, a good deal of work for him, for he could use his left hand only, the right being bent double upon the wrist; he held the boots between his knees and seemed quite happy to get them to shine. "This is your Saturday work, is it not?"—Yes, and "to-morrow is Sunday,—I go to communion."—"Can he?" we said, looking wonderingly at the brother.—"This one can, he knows just that much that going to communion is going to Jesus, don't you, Wilhelm?"—"Yes," says Wilhelm, lifting his clouded eyes,—"and He is good to us." Possibly he mixes up Jesus with the pastor who is good to them, for he is a half imbecile—well, and if he does, who shall say he should not go? Does he not go with the one thought "Jesus is good to us," and maybe hungering for his share of that goodness?

There are several smaller houses with patients of this kind, all more or less imbecile, affiliated to Eben-Ezer, the dining hall gathering the whole flock, about a hundred and fifty, at meal times. The good house-father of Eben-Ezer once was a shepherd; he is "shepherd" still, and has been these twenty years, shepherding these helpless sheep! His wife had come to Eben-Ezer as a servant girl five-and-twenty years ago, when the work first began. They have brought up five children of their own, five promising boys, being father and mother also to this helpless family! Well may Bodelschwingh trust

his workers: these "house-parents"—watch them, in any of these houses, fathers and mothers true, what are they but just shepherds for the great Shepherd of afflicted men! They all differ in character, for the Shepherd Himself has had the original training of them. They are simply Christian characters doing the common work in their own way. And the houses differ just as human families differ; it is the inimitable beauty of this colony, proving the living growth.

Over against Eben-Ezer, facing the same courtyard, is Zoar, the home of the epileptic boy imbeciles—about thirty, such little boys some of them, a pitiful sight. Some attempt is made at teaching them—mere object-lessons: there cannot be more than the humblest of attempts and with the humblest of results.

A few, the brightest of their number, are gathered in a Scripture class, faithfully and patiently taught till they repeat a Bible story with baby understanding and sing a hymn. One boy of seventeen can write his name, and is very proud of the feat.

With Zoar a story is connected. The last time Pastor von Bodelschwingh had an audience of the aged Emperor Wilhelm, His Majesty said, "How was that about Zoar? tell me again." And the pastor repeated the story. When the foundation stone of this house was being laid in 1878 a poor day labourer presented himself, confessing with much contrition that two years previously he had made a vow and had not kept it. He had been at the annual meeting, and for the first time had seen with his own eyes what it is to be an epileptic; he had witnessed some cases, children among them, and saw them carried away. He himself had four little ones at home, all hale and well, and the thought smote him he had never

thanked God as he ought. He resolved that in future he would present a yearly thank-offering of a penny each for his children. He had not done so, but now he was here with sixteen pennies for two years past and for two years to come. He did not want to give his name, not even the name of the village he hailed from ; he was a poor man, but he would say this : "Might not other folk be asked to do likewise?" Even the poorest of the poor, he thought, if they had healthy children, could well afford to spare a penny a year as an expression of their gratitude to God.

Pastor von Bodelschwingh was not slow to act upon this hint—a poor man's thought, who would fain do something for this work of mercy. The story was made known, and people liked it, and the poor farm labourer had quite a host of grateful imitators. The following year, when Zoar the Little could be opened free of debt, it was because the thousand pounds required had all come in, in pennies mostly. And a book is kept at Zoar in which not only the names, but many of the messages sent with these pennies have been entered. Not only parents had sent thank-offerings for their children, but little children out of their money boxes had sent pennies, that God might bless their kind parents. And others joined, remembering all manner of mercies to be returned thanks for. Some returned largely, but most were the offerings of the poor. An old grannie sent ten shillings because all her family were safe in heaven !

The aged Emperor also liked the story, and many a thank-offering *he* sent to Bethel ; he never forgot Bodelschwingh's family when Christmas came round, or any special help was required. But that poor man's happy idea of thank-offerings has been very fruitful at Bethel.

There is an organised penny collection, mostly among children, all over the country, and the offerings of the poor on many an occasion are the drops filling the bucket.

Thus, both Zoar and Little Bethel, the homes for the little ones of this afflicted flock, have been built by thank-offering pennies on behalf of children hale and sound.

It was not only Pastor von Bodelschwingh's idea, it was the main principle laid down by Pasteur Bost, who was the first to gather in epileptics at La Force, in south-western France—a principle he laid great stress upon—*The epileptic patient must first of all be brought to Christ.* There is little help for such in the body, but One can heal the soul; and, while very faithful, as we have seen, to all that pertains to the body, this soul cure is the main object at Bethel. Bodelschwingh says he considers a patient "doing well" when he has learned to bear his cross meekly; that he considers him "cured" when, laying down his poor tabernacle, he can die in the faith of the Saviour. There is no religious over-dosing at Bethel; there is too much of true work, of practical endeavour, there, to have time for unhealthy excitement. The patients are simply surrounded by the influences of the sanctuary, and many of them are true children of peace. They become so gradually; the fruits of the spirit grow. The word of God is ever in their midst, and the voice of prayer about them; but they are not driven—they are loved, they are nurtured. They are not asked about their inward experiences, about being "saved," and all that; but they are every day taken to Christ, and they know it. They learn it. There are classes of religious instruction; there is a Young Men's Christian Association among them; there

is their own beautiful choir, too, the singing and the instruments—means these, surely, helping them to grow. There is such an environment, so many about them who can help them on.

There is a house-father of a house not yet mentioned, Beersheba, a station for gentlemen patients of a more troubled kind than at Hermon; this house-father is a retired schoolmaster, a man, too, of the Ravensberger country, and, for the rest, you need but exchange two words with him, and you will know. Such a look about him, too! His name is Budde; he has long been a fisher of men in his own way, and folk in the neighbourhood call those "caught" by him *Buddhists*. He is Father Budde at Bethel, anyway; and one of those who make one wonder so much—or rather, give up wondering the more one sees of it—*how* Bethel has become such a church of the saints: a church which does not talk about social Christianity, but which most truly acts it.

Father Budde tells the following of one of his patients—a man of good position and education who had been making his way in the world. He became epileptic through the shock on the news of the sudden death of a beloved one. He had not troubled much about religion; but in the years of his affliction was noticed to open gradually to the Word of God. He began to value his Bible; he looked for its promises of comfort, of healing. He had always been a silent man. One day he surprised Father Budde with the question, "How was he to picture to himself the Saviour?" a question Father Budde met by another question: "Well, how should you say?" Says this man, "I have seemed to see Him lately—the face surrounded with a glory, and the light seems to go out from Him, and I feel swallowed up

in the light. But I have a better vision still. I see Him on the Cross, with arms outstretched, and *then* I can pray to Him ; and I feel drawn close, and I lay my head where John, the Beloved, laid his—quite close." Remember, the man in his day had not been a Christian, and was fast going down the hill now ; he had no memory left, no mental powers for any work to speak of, yet the things he heard, the teaching he received daily, —scarce knowing it for teaching—did its work in him. A few days later—it happened to be Ascension Day—Father Budde read to them about the world to which He has gone to prepare a place—a place for them also, where sorrow has passed away, and earth's crosses are laid down. This patient listened ; they all listened ; all such talk is made so plain and attractive to them. They retired to rest, and this man was telling the two or three he slept with he was just dying with a sense of *Heimweh*, a longing to be home ; and he repeated to them the verses which had been read to them of the former things which shall be past. And then he lay down quietly, and he *did* go home. He had his last fit that night, and gently passed away. They found him, with hands folded, and with a look on his face as though he knew already *why* his beloved was taken from him, *why* he had to pass through years of growing darkness—that he might wake up, and know it is light. These patients often die in a fit, or of the exhaustion ensuing.

On the whole they are happy—their pastors say so, and one can see it for oneself : there is more contentedness among them, contentment with the life which is their lot, than you would find among an equal number of ourselves perhaps. They have come through such deep waters, most of them : they are learning to be content, and they

love Bethel. Some years ago another colony was founded —there are about a dozen epileptic establishments now in Germany—and it happened to be a Roman Catholic one claiming her patients. So a number had to be sent away—two or three waggonsful. A month after a petition arrived, signed by the whole of them with their crooked letters and trembling strokes, entreating their mother Bethel to take back her children. It was not Bethel's fault the prayer could not be granted; and at this moment a number of patients from East Prussia are under dread of being required to leave, the province of Brandenburg being about to open an epileptic establishment of a thousand beds. How it will answer will have to be proved, for it is an undertaking of the public purse. Still, Bethel cannot take in the hundred thousand sufferers, and all efforts to mitigate the vast distress must be welcomed. Would they all were Bethels!

The mortality among these patients is very great; few reach over thirty or thirty-five, very few over forty, and only two or three in all these years of Bethel's experience have passed the age of fifty. The little mortuary bell of the colony (including the Sarepta patients) may be heard five or six times a week, Bodelschwingh telling his people almost every Sunday, they are a congregation of the dying—*eine Gemeinde der Sterbenden* —this too is *morituri te salutant!* and it is strange what a fascination their little cemetery has for them. It is their favourite walk. When there is a funeral, the coffin, whenever possible, is borne by the companions of him who is gone; and some of these patients would not miss a funeral for anything. To what should one ascribe this? It is noticeable even among the children —dying and going to heaven is all one to them, and

like going from one room to another. Everybody there talks quite freely about dying. We happened to meet Pastor Stürmer in the burial ground one afternoon, and we passed a youth sitting on one of the benches. We forgot to ask was he epileptic, but he certainly was consumptive. Says the pastor to him, with a nod, "Well, Charley, you like to sit here and look at your own little spot, don't you? it is all waiting." And Charley smiled; he said nothing, but he looked "yes." The pastor did not make it an occasion for speaking of the Beyond. It was just a sympathetic remark, as he would take it, to a dying youth. Their cemetery somehow to them is a garden of peace. That youth was not alone in the little burial ground; you always meet patients there, and who can tell what passes in their souls?

A pastor once died in their midst—Pastor von Lübke. He had for years been principal of a missionary college. He once came to preach at Bethel, and in that pulpit confessed himself a brother in affliction. "I have a right to speak to you, for I too am epileptic." He gave them a sermon which must have gone through and through them: "We are children of wrath," he said "dwelling in bodies on which He has set a mark." But his text was Genesis ix., and it not only speaks of judgment but also of the arc of peace. And he led them on to Him who even in their mortal bodies shall be glorified, and *they* changed into His image. This man remained in their midst for nearly a year, as house-father of Hermon—a patient sufferer, bearing his cross meekly, and helping others to bear theirs. And his death spoke louder than any sermon. His wife had been away, and he was going to meet her. The trap

stood at the door. It must have been in the premonitory excitement of a coming fit; the gentle, quiet man was suddenly seen darting from the house, overturning chair and table and leaping wildly upon the vehicle. He seized the reins, and remaining standing whipped and whipped the poor pony. It was little Fanny, a quiet animal; but she dashed away down the hill, he still whipping and whipping. The maddened creature fortunately took the road to her stable; the vehicle was seen careering through Workshop Street, stopping short at the end. It was a sharp pull-up, and the poor pastor was thrown; when they picked him up he lay in a fit. They could hardly hold him for violence; but he had knocked his head and the blood trickled down. It fell on his hand, and he saw it. And there was a great calm. "The blood of Jesus Christ," he said, "cleanseth us—cleanseth us——" and his spirit fled.

It was a going Home, even like Elijah's, in a chariot of fire.

CHAPTER VI

THE MINISTRY OF MERCY

"Serving the Lord."

THE backbone of Bethel is found in the spirit of her workers—the perfect surrender to a Christian ideal. These sisters, these brothers, have made that development possible. There is nothing in this country corresponding exactly to the German deaconess; and of ministering "brothers" we have so far not heard here. Mildmay and Tottenham, following the example, have trained deaconesses, we know; but how many of their sisters witness to the work by a *lifelong* devotion? They are to be counted by the dozen—by the score, perhaps. Of German deaconesses there is an army, and a steadfast army. What has made, what has constituted, it? What is the power at work, the spirit moving, what the cause of this visible effect? There are two things which stand out bright in a Bethel sister; her humility, her perfect obedience. If any doubt this, let them go to Bethel and see. These sisters, these brothers, have made the sacrifice of their own will completely; not for a day, not for a week, but completely. Yet they take no vow; theirs is the *liberty* of surrender, and the knowledge of this is the strength of their work. They are not units, they are freewill parts of a whole. We do not question the humility, the obedience, in workers

here; but this we say: The British character rather tends to individualise; the freeborn Briton survives even in consecration. This yields splendid results of its own, able workers, but it yields workers, rather than lifelong fellow-workers; it yields devoted lives in their own right. But there is a limit to this: the strength born of union is wanting; nay, more, that is wanting which tells such worker he or she is but an outpost of something stronger than personality behind. Personality is a great thing, but a fellowship of personalities is greater. In one word, the English deaconess is an embodiment of independent charity, but the German deaconess is a blossom of the Church, not of the visible institution, but of the *Church life* of the country; she is a part representing that whole. She is as much of the Church as the pastor is—both being servants—and she knows that. It is easy to give up your own will, to surrender personality, when you know yourself part of a mighty power—the world-conquering power of Christ. Using the word Church, we mean the outward expression of this power—the Church, apart from *"'isms";* and it seems to us that this spirit of Church-membership is the thing wanted to lift the English deaconess to that higher level, to make her one of a body, the ranks of which will swell just in proportion to the strength of the living thing behind that body. Vitality is the outcome of Life.

If any doubt this, let them go to Bethel and judge for themselves—only, by a mere visit they will not so easily discover this hidden secret of the work. Most emphatically we would say, We do know that of English workers there are splendid examples — examples not easily matched in any country; but

speaking of this German body of workers we are endeavouring to account for its strength. It is a fundamental difference, the difference between independence and union, the difference between a "free lance" and a soldier at his post.

The English sisterhoods each go their own way, strangers to one another; the German deaconesses, the *ten thousand* of them, of about fifty houses, form in reality one sisterhood, though each sister owes allegiance only to the house of her training, or, as the case may be, of her adoption. The houses—mother-houses they call them—each raising its own family of sisters, may differ in minor respects; but there is a bond of unity in their leading principles, in their working aims and efforts, in their mutual upbearing; and there is a strong *esprit de corps* among them. The cause of one house is the cause of all the other houses, and that cause is simply the cause of handmaidens of the Kingdom—of a body of handmaidens, all pursuing one object, following one calling, having for "honour" no first and no last. It is very beautiful, this work, which has nothing left of self-importance! These deaconesses are the Protestant equivalent of the "Sister of Mercy," with all her discipline, with more than her devotion—a devotion enhanced by the fact that she does not thereby lay up for herself any works of righteousness she has done. They are an army of Christian helpfulness going their quiet way in the land, but an organised army! They are what Phebe of Cenchrea was, whom St. Paul himself describes as a *servant of the Church* and a succourer of many.

The name of Kaiserswerth is known to English

readers; there the first seedling of this organised work was planted just upon sixty years ago. It has had a wondrous development. Kaiserswerth has trained over eight hundred sisters, and has sent workers into many countries. The Westphalian House in so far is a child of Kaiserswerth, as its original band of four sisters was delegated by the elder institution, when a few Westphalian pastors and Christian friends had resolved themselves into a committee for the purpose of starting a deaconesses' establishment in their own province.

Like Bethel itself, Sarepta also was first planned at Bielefeld, the work beginning humbly in a small house acquired by the committee. One of the four original deaconesses, Sister Emily Häuser, has ever since been the head-sister, or "mother," as she is called at Bethel. She is over seventy now, and has seen the little band of four expand into a sisterhood of six hundred, in little more than twenty years. No other deaconesses' house has had so rapid a growth, the reason here also being the fitness of the soil. From that Ravensberger country alone, over a hundred young men and women offer yearly for the service of mercy.

The house at Bielefeld, where the work first began, is now used as a home for aged women—one of the colony's many out-stations. It soon grew too small, and when the committee resolved on building, it was almost natural, yet surely it was by a special guidance, that the site bought was close to that other site where Bethel was rising; for God was even then preparing His servant who should carry this double work to a common development and to a height not dreamt of by the founders. The mother-house, Sarepta, as we now see it is a fine Gothic building right in the centre of the

colony, as though to be "mother" even to the epileptic homes, which, strictly speaking, are quite an independent growth; and, apart from being a training home for deaconesses, it is an infirmary with about one hundred and thirty beds.

It is a mistake to think that the deaconess is a sick nurse only; but this is true, that most deaconess institutions devote themselves to sick-nursing exclusively, and Sarepta, in this respect, materially differs from the bulk of them. The sisters are all trained to sick nursing—it is their own vocation; but they are also trained to parish work, looking after the poor, the forsaken, the sinking, and they are trained to teaching, infants especially. And if one in her own past history has developed a special fitness in any direction, that fitness is looked upon as a "talent" and put to use. Bodelschwingh's six hundred sisters are a power for good in the land. Is there one of them in a parish—they never enter a parish unless called—she is the pastor's right hand of influence. She is sick nurse, Bible-woman, a messenger for Christ, and, most important, she gathers in His lambs. They can put their hand to almost anything; and this yields a beautiful arrangement for relieving the tension of overwork: for instance, a nursing-sister worn with night-watchings will be sent for a time to do infant-teaching by way of a change; or a Kinder-garten sister tired out with her lively charges—they often have seventy or eighty to manage—will be called to rest her voice by some quiet sick bed. When it can be done, the perfection is a trio of sisters in a parish—one for the infants, one for sick-nursing, one for visiting; such trio is like three times three for strength, relieving one

another, helping one another—this too is fellowship. Such three make a little home for themselves, the parish providing the building, and the "keep" of the sisters—a home large enough to accommodate the infants and, if need be, occasional cases of nursing; patients mostly being attended in their own homes. This latter indeed on principle . a patient's relatives, his or her neighbours even, should not be deprived of the blessings inherent on sickness; they should be taught rather than relieved, taught how to attend on a sick one and how to make a sick bed comfortable within their means and by their own efforts. A great deal of help can thus be given, actually training people to help themselves. This is one of the great aims a Sarepta deaconess endeavours to keep in view, mere relief often being but poor charity; but *that* is true charity which seeks to lift folk, friends and neighbours included, to the level of any trouble requiring relief.

Of course the six hundred could never all be wanted about the colony itself; some seventy are employed among the female epileptics, some thirty are stationed by the sick beds of Sarepta, about twenty-five in the infant schools of the neighbourhood; the rest, nearly five hundred in number, are at work on two hundred different stations, in Germany, in the Netherlands, in France, in America, in Africa.

Any young women offering for service—and they come of all ranks, from the peasant maiden to the high-born lady, but most are of the people—are admitted on trial; after six months or a year passed by the sick beds of the mother-house they become auxiliary sisters. But it is only after some years of probation they enter the sisterhood by a solemn act of consecration, generally at

the annual meeting. They do not take upon themselves any vow, neither of celibacy, nor of any other kind; it is, however, expected of them that by that time—none being "consecrated" under the age of five-and-twenty—they fully know their own minds, and are honestly willing to devote their lives to the service, "unless some plain guidance at any future time should point to another path, in which case they shall consult the mother-house with the deference of a child to its parent, for the mother-house has 'adopted' them." There are occasional defections; some sisters do marry, some do change their minds, returning to their families; but, taken as a whole, they are a steadfast army.

The mother-house is mother indeed to this band of daughters; it supplies all their wants; feeds them, clothes them, nurses them in sickness, sees to their recreation when worn. They have a beautiful home of rest, Salem, among the hills, a few miles distant, where overworked sisters recruit, and a seaside home on one of the Hallig Isles, in the German Ocean; and they are cared for still when old and no longer able to work. A deaconess has no pay of any kind; she may not receive any pay or presents from patients; if she is nursing private cases any freewill gift is sent to the mother-house—no claim is made; for she is no pay-worker, she does labour of love. For sisters sent to public hospitals—such as those working at Bremen, for instance, sixty or seventy in number, or those stationed in Berlin—the municipalities pay Sarepta at the rate of nine pounds a year per sister; parishes, too, pay at this rate, or less, for a parish sister; but this is simply refunding the mother-house for clothing and other incidental expenses, the mother-house supplying its

absent daughters as it supplies those at home ; supplying them, not with clothing alone, but with a little pocket money also of six to nine shillings a month, that she may have to "give of her substance" to the poor, or to missions. And there are deaconesses (like the mother of Sarepta herself) who for a lifetime have thus lived and worked, have always been cared for, have always spent themselves, but never have had any money to speak of to spend. This, too, constitutes a difference between a deaconess here and a deaconess there. The Mildmay and Tottenham sister is not paid, but Mildmay and Tottenham are paid—taking their guinea or two a week —if they send out sisters. It lowers the character of the work. Much of the strength of these German sisterhoods has its hidden root in this unpaid work ; having no cares for themselves, present or future, they have no thought for themselves, they *can* live for others. It is the ministry of love ; and love begets love. The funds of Sarepta, like the funds of Bethel, apart from the provincial grants for poor patients, are largely made up by the freewill offerings of a multitude of humble friends —friends knowing the beauty of this work, happy and proud, therefore, to support it.

If you speak to any of these sisters, you are struck most with the brightness about them. They know they are serving Christ. Their service is a living sacrifice—a sacrifice of everything pertaining to self ; but they have risen beyond the thought of "sacrifice," and they are truly "cared for." They are a precious band, and those who have authority over them know that anything worth having is worth tending. We once heard Bodelschwingh say, "If I want to nurse my patients, I must first nurse my nurses." Then how does he nurse them, and how

does Sarepta ? The mother-house is in constant and regular communication with its six hundred daughters. For instance, Bodelschwingh holds a weekly class of religious and professional instruction—meaning by "professional" the moral apprehension of their calling. Now, of course, only the home sisters can attend in person, but all the rest of them attend by post. The questions set to the home circle are sent out to all the absent ones—there is a special "Sister Scribe" for that work—and the hundreds of them far and near answer the papers, and send them home, one of the pastors returning them corrected. And in several other ways the mother-house is in personal touch with the ever-growing band, the "Sister Scribe" sending out a monthly letter, for instance, with all the home news and matters of interest concerning the work. And every absent sister has a birthday letter and Christmas present sent her of a useful kind. That "Sister Scribe" is "Sister Sacristan" also, with no end of little duties thereby involved ; she is a niece of the famous theologian Hengstenberg, so for antecedents is all a scribe and sacristan should be. And from time to time the sisters from distant stations are called home, if not to the mother-house itself, then at least to the colony, to renew their sense of oneness with the place upon which they are taught to look as "home."

They have a weekly family gathering. Of a Wednesday evening their large hall is set for a tea supper, a little more festively than for ordinary meals. All the sisters about the place or from the near neighbourhood, who can be spared from their stations, attend—some eighty to a hundred, perhaps, in all ; the several pastors, with their families, and other workers about the place are invited, and any visitors who happen to be at the colony

are sure to be honoured with a seat near Pastor von Bodelschwingh. He, of course, presides, unless unavoidably prevented. The meal over, the pastor gives them a pleasant talk, telling them anything of interest within the colony, anything of interest happening in the world at large—a simple and pleasant way of keeping them in touch with the world about them. Or, if there is nothing happening, then he has a store of recollections; and if one could only be at many of these gatherings, one could almost catch his biography unknown to him. He will never tell it otherwise; but he has a charming and artless way on such occasions of diving into his own history—a field rich and varied.

The sisters evidently value these evenings, if contented faces are a criterion. One can imagine a stranger alighting at one of these gatherings, stirred to the heart with *Heimweh*—that nameless longing which will be stilled when wanderers reach home. We all know it at times, but do not all own to it—that hunger for something we have not. These sisters have won beyond it, or nearly so. There is a great strength in such union; they upbear one another. No wonder the colony is growing and spreading which has such workers. If England is ever to start in right earnest a work for her epileptics—and surely she should!—she must first train such nurses.

The deaconesses are drafted off to the various epileptic homes round about, simply on the strength of the love which suffereth long—suffereth long even with loathsome things; for there is much that is loathsome about epilepsy. And their thought is not to win heaven thereby, but rather to make this poor earth a little more like heaven than epilepsy has left it for these stricken ones.

But this is not all. Sarepta really is a power in the land; she is training others besides her own regular sisterhood. The Order of St. John, for instance, has made an agreement with the Westphalian mother-house to train nurses for its purposes, to be ready for summons in time of epidemic or of war. Many a maiden offers for this service, goes through a six months' term or so of training at Sarepta, adding to her experience in other hospitals, if she likes, as a candidate of this splendid "order." And even private applicants are received for training, the mother-house being of opinion it is well for daughters and future wives to understand something of sick nursing. All such go through the regular course, and would be ready for any national calamity. Sarepta herself is ready. Against time of war, at least of invasion, the colony, in return for facilities and actual aid granted by the country, has pledged itself to put up a thousand beds, Sarepta and Nazareth supplying them with their own deacons and deaconesses. Everything is so thorough in the Father-land, everything so methodical, so thought of beforehand, there would be no bustle; these good sisters, like the great army itself, are ready to take the field at a day's notice, the *Kriegs-Schwestern*, that is, the amateur sisters just spoken of, taking their place the while at home.

Pastor von Bodelschwingh, as military chaplain, went through the campaigns of 1866 and of 1870, so he knows something about it. Some of the sisters get first-rate surgical experience, the Charité of Berlin and other large hospitals being supplied with nurses from Sarepta. In lunatic asylums also Sarepta sisters are found—in fact, there is no branch of the work to which they are

strangers. Some are in rescue homes for the fallen of their kind. Some have gone to Africa to do missionary sick-nursing. Sarepta, in one word, is spreading a net of mercy, and no place is too distant if she is wanted. She is not encroaching, does not want to make proselytes for power or influence ; she is simply a handmaiden of the Gospel of Christ, carrying help and healing, and serving for the sake of serving. Her great work is to the poor, because they need her.

And the Brothers! The deacons are of more recent date than the deaconesses, and there are not many deacon-houses as yet in Germany ; but they are yielding first-rate workers. The visitor to Bethel will notice a great red-brick building, standing at an angle between Sarepta and Bethel House. It is named Nazareth, bearing the inscription over its main entrance, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Come and see." And if you go and "see," this is what you find : It is scarcely a dozen years since this house was opened, and much good has come out of it. Out of Bethel's own need this brotherhood has grown. Male nurses were required for the epileptic colony, and it was found more and more difficult to procure an adequate supply from other quarters. So the brothers at work there already set themselves to train their own helpers and successors. The calling of these deacons includes more than sick nursing ; they are required for general home mission work, and trained, therefore, as evangelists. Many of them, as they advance in years and experience, become "house-fathers," such as those we have spoken of ; and if not required at Bethel itself, house-fathers, and junior brothers too, are wanted for the labour colonies, and

their kindred institutions—of which anon—or they are sent to the foreign mission field. The Brotherhood of Nazareth in these ten or twelve years has grown to about two hundred and thirty members.

Many of the brothers have learnt a regular trade; the house-fathers at Bethel, for instance, as we have seen, act as masters of the various workshops, and the junior brothers as foremen to the patients over whom they are set, being their nurses bodily and spiritual at the same time. Others, again, are thorough farmers; farming was their occupation originally, and their knowledge is turned to use in the brotherhood. In fact, in this respect, these brothers are something like St. Paul, who was a tentmaker. They do not renounce their trade on becoming deacons; it is put by, as it were, to be called into service if wanted. It may be wanted; it may not be wanted. But sick nursing is the regular course they all go through; they are trained in the sick wards of Sarepta, and further educated by hospital work in the great cities—in Berlin, Bremen, etc.,—and they are sent out also for private nursing. While at Nazareth, they are having religious and other instruction by the pastors, to fit them for the deeper part of their calling. They form a body, with rights of corporation, and are governed by a "*Brüder-rath*,"—a council, consisting of the pastors of the colony and a number of senior brothers, such as happen to be stationed about the colony itself. Every brother owes implicit obedience to this council, by whom the work is appointed.

Theirs are consecrated lives; and you will know what this means if you watch the brothers at work among the imbeciles of Eben-Ezer and Zoar. These houses are the test station; it is the hardest work, that is, the most

repulsive to the natural man. So the young brothers, those who have entered the service but lately, are put on their trial there. If after a month or two in these houses they still feel they can make sick nursing their calling, then, indeed, they are fit for it, as far as the moral fitness is concerned. We have no words to express the admiration one feels—simple admiration—as one watches these brothers. If a woman, through inborn pity and from the love that sways her, can render to the suffering service in itself distasteful, well, that is largely implanted in her nature; she can scarcely help it. Motherhood is strong in every woman, and naturally goes out to the helpless. But that *men* should tend these imbeciles with woman's tenderness is a marvel. It takes true charity to do what we saw, and a rare devotion. Think what that "tending" means: sleeping with some ten of them; and these epileptics—partly due to the medicine—have an odour about them which love only can put up with; it means seeing to the cleanliness of human creatures who have lost all sense of cleanliness. *They* do it—for what paid servant would? And as we watched the young brothers at Zoar, some under twenty, mere bright-faced boys some of them, we thought again, What power save that of love can do this? Yet whence have these boys such love? If men advanced in years, perhaps from life's teachings, find strength for such service, it is marvellous enough; but what words will express one's admiration in seeing such work done by young men, who have all life before them, with its promises and shining hopes! Admiration is not the word, it is simple reverence. We expressed some of our thoughts to one of these youthful brothers—he was but nineteen, and looked such a bright youth—"How *can* you do it?" "Well," he replied, "we

know we cannot in our own strength, and we are here on trial for the life we have chosen. It is a little hard sometimes, but there is a love which helps." And there was a light in his eye which said he spoke true. He was a mere boy, with no down on his lip, and his idiot flock clung to him, crying, "*Brother! Brother!*" Truly there is a love which helps; one saw it, and felt rebuked. And they do look happy, these brothers, as though they had a real compensation in their work. It is for them the Silly Valley will have changed its name. You may scan their faces as they sit at dinner, some twenty of them, with the imbeciles of Eben-Ezer and Zoar—they are of all ages between eighteen and forty—and you will not see one gloomy face among them; degrees of brightness you may notice.

It is not only the "brothers" who appear to be under the spell of pitying love at Zoar. There is always a batch of young men at Bethel fresh from college, and waiting for holy orders. They come—some of them sent by the Berlin *Dom Stift**—to undergo a little training, and to gather some practical experience at this colony of mercy as to what Charity is. Of course, they must themselves be desirous of being fitted by some extra "course" for the ministry awaiting them These young gentlemen, then, for a month or so, very readily are set to make "studies" at Zoar, doing the regular brother's work for the time being; and some of these "candidates" even are caught with the spirit of the place. One, a young Swiss, stayed three months at Zoar, and went away saying he had learned more there than in his three

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* The Divinity Hall in connection with the Berlin Cathedral.

years at college. Of course he had—he had matriculated in that higher college of which the thirteenth of the first of Corinthians speaks.

The "brothers" are mostly recruited from the so-called lower classes—why do we call them *lower*, when they yield such men?—yet gentlemen sometimes offer. As a rule, a "gentleman" who wants to serve Christ has, by position and education, other roads before him; but there is now at Beersheba a brother, not quite a young man, and lately entered, who was going to be a barrister, had taken his degree at college, and all that, and, led by what private life-teaching one would not inquire, came to enrol himself a deacon at Bethel.

It is the wonderful spirit of service, emanating from some central influence, and almost infectious, which is the strength of this colony. Bodelschwingh holds a *Brüder-Stunde* on Sundays, the one hour in the week when he talks to these brothers in training about the life they have chosen. We can, of course, not speak of it from personal knowledge, but we heard one of these young men say that the brothers, after such talk, are always ready for the lowest place, nay, fired with a longing for it! He, of whom they all learn, in his simple heart-stirring way has been talking to them of the Christ-taught washing of feet, till even the meanest work of Eben-Ezer and Zoar becomes transfigured, and they see Christ Himself going in and out of these houses lavishing His tenderest love on these helpless sufferers. Having heard this, we understood the light in the eye of a Zoar brother saying "there is a love which helps"; we saw the mainspring of that work. This is why this colony prospers, why it is so successful. Money, though of course money is needed, is mere dross when you want

to do such work. It is the workers—men and women consecrating themselves—who are the secret of all this. It is real consecration. What outward gain is there? Pocket-money to the extent of one shilling per week, rising a little as years go on; and, if they marry and become house-fathers, then fifteen to twenty pounds or so a year for clothing themselves, and attiring the house-mother, of a like mind with themselves.

One cannot speak too strongly of this consecrated work, this ministry of mercy, for this is the true spring of all that goes on there. Epileptic homes, on a smaller scale and of different character, could be managed perhaps with paid labour; but if Bethel had to advertise for nurses, seek them, remunerate them, *her* work would collapse. Such a colony requires the workers Bethel has found. As our story goes on this will become clearer still. It is only because Pastor von Bodelschwingh has such workers he can spread like the tree planted by the rivers of water, extending his branches of mercy in every direction, and whatsoever he doeth *does* prosper.

For Bethel, if a working model of the Programme of Christianity, is a wonderfully complete one.

CHAPTER VII

BABY CASTLE

"Suffer the little children to come unto Me."

YOU cannot spend a month at Bethel without witnessing the laying of foundation stones and the opening of new houses—it is one of the commonest occurrences there. That colony has a marvellous faculty of extending its borders, augmenting its work; and if growth means life, there is much life at Bethel. We have already spoken of a Baby Castle, the beautiful new house paid for by thank-offering pennies, "Little Bethel," to which Sister Mary on the day of the semi-Jubilee carried her sixty epileptic and otherwise afflicted children. But there are two other "castles" for the little ones, Bethel, among her many missions, having a special one devoted to the lambs of the flock.

The beech wood round about Zion Church on a summer's day is always an animated scene; there are patients about, and Sarepta convalescents, and deaconesses flitting in and out, taking the short cuts through this centre of the colony. Nor is the place they call their open-air church hedged in for Sunday use only; it forms a week day class-room, in which the pastors on fine days hold their catechisings and similar gatherings of the stricken congregation. Walking about that wood, therefore, in itself is an education in Bethel

history. One day we noticed a special commotion: a clearance had been made in one of the quietest parts; there was levelling going on, a number of epileptics being busy with wheelbarrow and shovel. A fortnight later the wheelbarrows had disappeared, and one noticed a foundation wall rising; and presently the women folk arrived with garlands, and a flagstaff was raised for the hoisting of their Zion banner, "Let us arise—." "What is it all about?" "Oh, Pastor Siebold is coming home to-morrow, and we'll lay the foundation stone of the new orphanage." And it was laid two or three days before the Jubilee day.

So they have an orphan work at Bethel? Yes, they have. It has grown out of the infant classes of the sisters. We have spoken in the previous chapter of the Kinder-garten work in connection with Sarepta, these sisters having about a dozen infant schools in neighbouring parishes, and one at Bethel itself, which, at the same time, forms the "academy" where deaconesses train for this special work. This house—it bears the name of "The Good Shepherd"—besides its little day-scholars, the "infants" proper—has grown to be the centre of a very remarkable orphan work. It gathers the waifs of the province, but it does not keep them; it finds parents for them round about. That Ravensberger country is the real orphanage. These wonderful peasant folk, when they have brought up their own children, hand in their names at Bethel for the receiving of any orphans, *for Christ's sake*, Bethel can send them; and Pastor Siebold assured us that he has always more parents ready to take his waifs to their homes and hearts than he has waifs needing parents! The house of "The Good Shepherd" has collected about five hundred orphans

these last ten years, and most of them are out in these peasant homes. This seems to us a wonderfully fine way for a province to bring up its orphans. It is something like Dr. Barnardo's and Miss Macpherson's plan, yet how different! These children are not sent to strangers, however kind, across the sea; they are not expatriated; they are brought up in their own home country, in the most natural way, by people as like their own parents as possible, in outward surroundings as like as possible to those in which they were born. How wholesome, how natural this seems, does it not? It seems a way after God's own heart, does it not, that Christian folk, having brought up their own children, should be ready to bring up a few more, just for His sake? If we really believed what Christ once said, that the angels of these little ones always behold the face of their Father in heaven, perhaps we too would deem it a privilege for His sake to be father and mother to them here. Some of us in this might learn a great lesson from these humble Ravensberger Christians. But the fact is, we do our charity by deputy, we send our subscriptions to an orphanage; and sending our sovereigns there, possibly we send the blessings there, which, with one such little one, might enter our own house and home. Did not Christ say very specially, "Whoso shall receive one such little child, *receiveth Me?*" Why do we not act as though we believed this?

Well, these Ravensberger peasant folk believe it, and act upon it; they take in these children, Bethel being "guardian" to the whole of them. Pastor Siebold—Pastor von Bodelschwingh's coadjutor for Sarepta, as Pastor Stürmer is for the Bethel proper—is in regular correspondence with all these parents;

the children are not lost sight of: however trustworthy these foster-parents in any individual case may be, Bethel continues the mother of them all, and they are visited. Father Budde, the house-father of Beersheba, goes his regular rounds in this great orphanage, not announcing his visits, but coming in upon these parents and children on all sorts of unexpected occasions, so that Bethel may be quite sure that her orphan family is doing well. At regular times also Pastor Siebold arranges gatherings of these adopted parents and adopted children, sometimes at Bethel, sometimes in neighbouring parishes, to keep up their feeling of relationship with the colony.

As a Christian work surely this is beyond praise and commendation—it is done simply for love; work for which no money whatever is wanted, work, therefore, wondrously pure and beautiful! With a sense of shame one says, It is what cannot be copied. It appears to us a spark from the fire Divine, and such things needs must grow from within. Yet might not some of us learn a lesson of these simple Ravensberger Christians?

Over and over again one asks oneself the question at that colony, How is it? One sees and feels the flowing streams of Christ-inspired work. In their main course from the centre to the outer circle, or from the outer circle to the centre? Is Bethel the secret source of so much blessing, her spirit overspreading the surrounding country? Is the country a land of the chosen, so that a Bethel there cannot but grow? We have spoken on another page of the groundwork, yet it is a question not easily answered: many things must work together for such fruit-bearing;

but Bethel, both centre and outer circle, is true to its name—a house of God among men.

Yet another Baby Castle—the real one, the *Kinderheim*. Day after day we have watched the ailing flock (not epileptic) in their summer haunt in the beech wood. *Sarepta* means a refiner's place, and their text is, "He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver." Well, just over the way is the "Sarepta" of the little ones, and the Refiner would seem to have His own chosen place in this "Children's Home." There is much suffering here, but the silver grows bright; there is much dying here, but *Kinderheim*, altogether lovely, is one of the happiest places in the colony.

We got our first impressions there, dropping in one early afternoon, and happening upon the infants' ward—a whole row of them, under twelve months, cot after cot. They were all awake, all smiling, though the hand of death was on every one of them. "What wonderfully good babies!" said we to the sister, not trusting ourselves with more for the lump rising in one's throat. "They have just had their midday sleep," says the sister, as if that most fully accounted for it. But who, knowing nursery life, ever heard of a dozen infants all going to sleep together, and all waking up together, smiling? It seemed as though even these unconscious little souls had learned the one lesson of the place—self-surrender. And if you went near, their little hands stretched out to you. If you gave them a finger they clasped it almost gratefully, and their eyes followed you—it was all the talking they could do. Such white little faces: what ails them? "They are all in consumption," says the sister—all in consumption, paying for father's or mother's sin, children

of drunkards, laying down their innocent little lives. They in the Refiner's furnace, some of their parents in prison the while—some in actual prison, all in the prison of vicious living. Surely the angels of these little ones behold the face of the All-Merciful in heaven while this goes on—laying down their little lives for their sinning parents! There is much silent redemption going on we wot not of. Not many months will pass, and every one of these babies will stand before the Throne, little lambs of the Shepherd. And what of their parents? No brother can redeem a brother, we know; but these death-marked infants spoke to us more loudly than any sermon we ever heard of the dying Love paying the debt for a sinning world.

Let no one say we are idealising, romancing, giving subjective impressions. We showed a deputation of magistrates round the place one day; they had come from a distant part of the country, wanting to start some public charity in their own town. It was just before the Jubilee, when everybody was busy, and we, beginning to be at home in the colony, could not but take pity on these forlorn deputies. It was not an infant ward they were thinking of; but we took them to these dying babes, that they might hear that sermon also. And we noticed the awe stealing over their faces, and one turning away to hide something very much like a tear. Perhaps he had children at home—perhaps troublesome children. He had been bending over one of these cots, thinking his ticking watch would please that dying infant; and he saw a wasted baby face turned up at him, a smile passing over it, and eyes saying they were beyond glittering things, and he suddenly turned and left the room.

Almost every week or two one of these children goes to its crown: that Baby Castle also is a "congregation of the dying," the mortuary bell going very often for *Kinderheim*. But death has lost its terrors there. There are children here up to the age of twelve or thirteen, but their one talk, when one has gone, is: "Gone to the *liebe Heiland*"—to the children's Saviour in heaven. One wonders and wonders, but it is simply true. It is Sister Lina who has this lovely work among this flock; they call her "Auntie"—everybody is uncle or auntie to these children—but she is *the* Auntie, and her influence is something marvellous. A quiet, unpretending woman is Sister Lina. What a heart hers must be, for there are fifty or sixty always appealing to it! and how jealous she is of laying bare the inner life of *Kinderheim*, always drawing close the veil of holy silence about these little ones, to present them unspotted to Him who seeth in secret! We have watched her with a dying baby, and we shall never forget it: there are things too sacred for words. When we called the next day, the passing-bell having told us the child had gone, she showed us the little conqueror lying with hands folded, and wearing the victor's crown—myrtle or laurel, she never omits that! And presently the Nazareth boys come to carry the little coffin, she collecting those of the children who are able, and following the babe to its resting-place. How many she has laid to sleep, and what a *mother* she will be in a Day to come!

If it were question of biography much could be said of *Kinderheim* and its little lives. Truly there is a refining going on there—a purifying, and the silver grows bright. It was Christmas once at *Kinderheim*. In the summer you may see them and hear their voices as of

birds in the beech wood, there being not only happiness, but even mirth at *Kinderheim* amid all the suffering. But now it was winter. The little convalescents, boys and girls, were singing their hymns, and on Christmas Eve the cots of the babes stood in a circle about the tree—a girl baby of the number who would not much longer be among them, evidently. The white wasted face was getting more wasted every day, and the little chin more pointed, and the children called her "Mousie" because of the thin, pointed face. Well, "Mousie" too had been taken to the Christmas tree. She was perhaps a year old; and her eyes grew bright, she raised her wasted hands in baby wonder, a smile flickered over her face—and she was gone. It was somewhat unexpected, and it saddened all that flock beneath the tree. But none more sorrowful than little Laura—a frail child about ten years old, though you would have taken her for scarcely more than six or seven. Little Mousie had been her special charge, given her by "Auntie," who teaches these children they are one another's care. "I didn't pray for Mousie this morning," she wailed: "I thought of Christmas only, and now she is gone!" But that night, when the children's ward was hushed, the sisters being at their supper, a song rose, and following the voices "Auntie" came upon Laura and five or six others outside the door, behind which Mousie lay sleeping: here they stood in their night dresses in the dimly lit hall, singing a children's hymn of little feet crossing the border—"*To live is Christ*," they sang, "*and to die is gain*." It was Laura's doing, who had called up the others—herself a dying child and barely ten years old. We do not know what the doctor said to this performance of little patients on a December night; but there

are things by the side of which "what the doctor says" shrinks into a corner.

Laura had been for some years in the *Kinderheim;* she was but five when she was brought there by a parish sister, who had found her utterly neglected. Her early childhood had been nothing but misery; she was reticent and shy, as though she had never known a ray of love. It took some time before that chilled little heart thawed to the influences of *Kinderheim;* but these influences won her completely, and for six years—she was in a slow decline, dying eventually of heart disease—she, in her weakness, was the child-servant of the children. Not that she did not require purifying. One day some naughtiness had been committed. "I haven't done it," says Laura, and another child was punished. Laura went to bed that night, but could not sleep. Another girl, knowing what was wrong, stepped up to her cot. "Laura, aren't you asleep yet?" "No," says Laura, "I cannot sleep." "Do you know that our Auntie is sitting in the parlour and crying?" At this Laura, bursting from her bed into the room adjoining, is on her knees before Sister Lina. "Oh, Auntie, I have told a story!" But she never after this told another, growing in grace almost visibly; and to the last, even when she had to be carried, and could sit on a sister's lap only, she never missed the children's service in the home chapel,—white, and frail as a lily, she never lost a word of the teaching given these children. And quite a number of the dying nurslings were her "care"; she would sit by their cots, spending her love on them, and heaven was the nearer because so many of her little charges went there before her. Her own sufferings often were acute, but when asked, could she still bear the pain, her invariable

answer was, "If the *liebe Heiland* has sent it, surely I can!"

One day—it was not so very long before her own going—Auntie said, half playfully, "Do you think there will be room there for us to follow?" "Oh," cried Laura, "I can squeeze myself together: look how I can squeeze!" And she drew in her thin little figure as though her one thought were to make room for all the rest of them. Said another girl, "I am not so sure I want to go—I know what *Kinderheim* is, and I don't know heaven." "Don't you?" cried Laura; "you would then if you'd just believe the *liebe Heiland* is there!"

And she would talk of the many children gone during the six years of her own illness, right certain she would meet and know them all again. By-and-by the home-call came for this child also; she lay with laboured breath quite satisfied the time had come. "Look," she cried, starting suddenly, "a host of angels, and—oh, yes!—all the children among them; and—oh, look!—little Mousie right on Jesus' lap!" And thus this little sufferer died in simplest faith that dying was to be with Jesus, and with the "other children" in glory. When they laid her to rest, the pastor gave this testimony at her grave: "We preach the peace of God—she had it."

What influences of the sanctuary must be playing about these children's cots to ripen such fruit.

There was another little sufferer about the same time—little Jeannie, hopelessly scrofulous, her mother dead, her father serving his turn in prison. She was all swathed in wadding and bandages, a little Lazarus to look at. But she, too, heard and saw much at *Kinderheim* she had never heard or seen before, and was as willing a learner as Laura. One day, when

Auntie went her morning rounds, the child showed her a fresh swelling about her neck. "Oh, Jeannie," says Auntie, "I think I know where you are going!" "To church?" cried Jeannie. It had been her desire for weeks that she might be carried once more to church with the others. "No," says Auntie; "I think you are going to a place better still—don't you know?" "*We* know," cried the other children. "Jeannie will be leaving us to go to heaven." And Jeannie was content to go; she only was anxious to know if there were churches in heaven; she thought there must be. And she was making ready to go, for Auntie had said she should go.

This is how these children have the fear of death taken from them—love standing by their cots, and telling them of the "better place," as we talk to children of a holiday treat. But Jeannie did not go just yet—there was a work she yet should do—she, one of the faithful ones also in the children's vineyard. Bethel about that time had begun a mission-work in Africa, and since in that commonwealth all bear together and suffer together and rejoice together, and, as a colony, work together for the Kingdom, even the babes at *Kinderheim* are within this circle of outgoing love. The first batch of sisters had left for East Africa, and Sister Lina had told her flock all about it, and of the black children out there who never had a Christmas tree and never heard of a Saviour. Little Jeannie was deeply moved, and looking about in her play-box, gave Sister Lina one halfpenny; it was all she had, the gift of some visitor—was it enough, she wondered, to send some of the good things they had to that poor Africa? And He who saw the widow's mite will have seen Jeannie's halfpenny. But the child did more—how the thought grew in her little

brain no one knows ; but for two or three months after, this dying child-pilgrim, about to win home, put out her bandaged hand to every visitor passing by her cot, pleading for pennies for the poor black children. And she collected nearly ten pounds ! Pastor von Bodelschwingh was away in the colony's home of rest by the North Sea when that child's home-call came. She firmly believed he was away in Africa looking after the black children, and she did not close her weary eyes without sending him a letter, getting another child to write it for her. "Dear Uncle Pastor," the letter said, "I think I am going to heaven now ; I would have liked myself to give you this money for the poor black children, but I am so weak now, so this for them, with Jeannie's love."

Will the reader tell us we are idealising a place in which such fruit grows even among the children ? Pastor von Bodelschwingh begged us not to say anything in praise of any one, yet what can we do, telling this story, but just say what we have seen and heard ?

A dying child is there at this moment, little Henry—Heini, they call him—seven years old, dying of hip disease. If you ask him, "Heini, how are you ?" (*Wie geht es dir ?*) his invariable answer is, "*Ganz gut !*" And indeed it "is well" with him, though his poor limbs are in weights and bandages, and he wasted to a skeleton. It was his one desire to see yet a Christmas here—"I am going to heaven," he kept saying, "but I would so like to have Christmas yet with all the children !" It was his first Christmas, he being of Jewish parents, and he had it. He was carried in, the central figure of that flock beneath the tree. These children had all come in with the one thought they were coming to the manger, to

sing their hymns to the Holy Child Jesus born that night. And the prayerfulness, aye the worship shining in their upturned faces—one must have seen it in order to believe. Pastor von Bodelschwingh conducted the children's Christmas service, they repeating the Gospel story, their verses and hymns one after another. To look at them it was the one business of life to sing and say of the goodness of God; yet they were like other children, being gathered for the presents human love had prepared. They were to have their dolls and whips and whistles, only their little service came first. And it was real. There was a hush; Heini was folding his hands to say what he had to say—a hymn of hosannas *for mercies bestowed!* "What then must heaven be," the child was saying, "if this poor earth is so full of light!" He has never known aught but suffering here, yet with his simplest conviction—you saw it in his eyes, a light more shining than of Christmas tree—he spoke of the shower of mercies making this poor life so bright—"*What then will heaven be?*" He is waiting to go—like a ripened sheaf to be garnered home. He lingers yet, surely yet having a mission—for is not such child a living sermon, nay, one of God's own angel messengers to all that ailing band? No wonder there is peace at *Kinderheim*, and loveliest obedience, yea, holy submission, and happy little lives!

Even their everyday life is a pleasure to watch. Go in, say at meal time, and you find the little things, such as are up and too young to feed themselves, sitting on low stools in a half circle, here six and there six, mouths open, for all the world like swallows' nests, the feeding sisters, black dress and white cap, hovering before them like mother swallows, now filling this little mouth, now

that—it is the sweetest picture. One would love to photograph *Kinderheim* in all its aspects. Little friendships spring up. There is one little dot having taken to its heart another little dot; neither can walk for limb disease, except by pushing a little chair; but if dot two cries, dot one is after it to wipe its tears. They are not three years old.

There is a black child at *Kinderheim*, not a sick child, a little girl, Fatuma—*Elizabeth* Fatuma since her baptism—saved from the slavers and sent home by one of their missionaries. For Bethel has begun a noble work in Africa, it is her latest development, and we will just mention it here, little Jeannie being the link between Baby Castle and the "poor black children."

So even in the Dark Continent the merciful hand of Bethel is busy. There are four stations in East Africa, a fifth just forming, and some of her deacons and deaconesses at work there, telling the story of Christ the Healer to the "poor black children" who come to them for bodily treatment. The leading missionaries, some of them pastors gone out at their own expense, are in every instance men who, whatever their college honours, have gone through their course of training as simple brothers among Bethel's own afflicted children, learning to serve Christ humbly among the imbeciles and epileptics before carrying His Gospel of good-will to the heathen; and who, gone out now to their larger sphere, have taken with them the spirit of Bethel, that comforting spirit to which every "bound one," black or white, and bound in whatever fetters of Satan's kingdom, is a Prisoner of Zion, a captive to be set free. And these missionaries, these Bethel brothers and sisters, are armed with a special strength,—ambassadors of Christ

they for that home-congregation, whose love, whose prayers are ever with them. So this work too is likely to grow; you cannot go about Bethel and doubt this, for her very patients—not only the little ones—are warmed towards the Dark Continent.

This mission has quite a character of its own, and in certain respects it is unique; it is unique in its kind of workers, its pastors, its deacons, its deaconesses; it is unique in its manner of finding and preparing workers; it is unique in the special blessing to be noted, that it is the only African mission which after three years of work has not a single death to record! Bodelschwingh on taking over the struggling stations of a Berlin Society—which society still finds the funds, he finding the men—at once, from the fever-breeding coast districts, made a start for the hill country, his ever being the practical eye, however ideal the endeavour. The mission and hospital work at Tanga and Dar-es-Salaam nevertheless goes on.

As for finding the men, the visitor, right in the centre of the epileptic colony, in the beech wood, and in the very shadow of Zion Church, will come upon a house bearing for inscription *Candidaten Convict*,* the inmates of which in every instance are university graduates preparing for holy orders, some of whom, having heard the call from Bethel, have come to this little college in

* "Convict," Latin *convictus*, from *convivo*, a boarding or living together. It is a pet thought with Bodelschwingh that in this *Candidaten Convict* Bethel has a Divinity Hall of her own, where university graduates, leaving their college honours and college wisdom behind them, might have an opportunity of resting their minds awhile from "higher criticism," girding themselves for the time being with the towel of practical theology instead. As shown in the foregoing chapter (p. 92) many, coming to this little "Hall," return thence to the regular ministry of the country.

obedient surrender, to be fitted there for Christ's missions to "the least of them," whether at home or abroad. The one thing asked of them is a willingness to be workers of the Kingdom in whatever sphere. And as you go about the colony you come upon these young men everywhere, learning to be servants—Christ's servants. But the so-called higher knowledge is not therefore neglected · even Suaheli is being studied at that "*Convict*," and Scripture instruction of course is there. When they are ordained, some are sent to home mission work, some to Africa, according to their fitness ; and the lessons learnt at Bethel go with them to whatever sphere they go. The African mission, however, one cannot help seeing, is a pet child at Bethel, amid her manifold work. Even among the clouded ones of her flock, if you go and tell them there has been happy news, a nice letter, faces brighten with expectance and a deafening cry of "*Africa*" goes through the room. Among the epileptic boys at Nazareth, there is one, little Peter, a nice bright lad, who spends all his spare time in catching mice, getting a penny or two for every dozen he traps ; and if you ask him what his efforts are for, it is always "the black children," he investing his pennies at Bethphage in illuminated cards and Bible pictures to go out to Africa, where some sixty or seventy children saved from the slavers have been gathered into a school in which the Bethel children are deeply interested.

There are two Washamba boys at Nazareth, lads of about fourteen or fifteen, doing well ; and it is their one hope, as also it is little Fatuma's, that one day they may go back to Africa, taking the message of Bethel with them to their own people. Walking about the colony the other day, we came upon two adult negroes—stalwart

young men. Who were they? They had come to Bethel of their own accord, one but lately, one some little time ago, bringing their story with them. They had been, the one with a menagerie, the other with a circus troupe, acting "wild men" till they were sick of it; and hearing of Bethel they came, one of them all the way from Copenhagen, asking to be "saved"! To be sure they were kept—no one coming to Bethel with the prayer to be helped is sent away—and being muscular fellows they have been put into the smithy, to prove their willingness of giving up the "wild man" for honest labour. They are learning horse-shoeing now, or whatever may be going, no one taking any particular notice of them—everything is done in such wholesome fashion at Bethel—but they will be watched, they will be taught, and they will be trained according to their fitness. There must be something in these fellows worth training, considering that of their own free will, having come to the dregs of a miserable life, they yielded to the power of attraction going out from this colony. They are both of Jamaica origin, having run away, one of them from Christian parents, but now safely landed at Bethel.

Such is the connection of this colony with the Dark Continent. It is because Bethel does so much at home, that she has love and time and possibilities left to carry her message of mercy to poor Africa also, "bleeding to death through all her pores" with the horrors of slavery. For Charity, beginning at home, never stops there. And if there is one thing to be learned at Bethel, it is the lesson of the love abounding—the love of Christ encompassing every human need.

CHAPTER VIII

BETHEL TO THE RESCUE

"... saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them."

BEHIND Pastor von Bodelschwingh's little manse you notice a rough retaining-wall against the slopes of the church hill. The path above leading straight to the recreation ground of the convalescents of Sarepta and *Kinderheim*, you naturally conclude the wall to have been erected for their greater privacy, shutting off, as it does, the beech wood from being too freely entered by any chance passer-by. So it has; but it is a memorable wall. Great things have small beginnings, and here the modern problem has been solved—how to deal with social distress. That rough stone wall is a monument!

The question what to do with the unemployed has been as much to the front over there as it is here. There is this difference, however, between England and Germany: that the "submerged" and starving here mostly form the helpless sediment of the great cities, whereas there they swarm over the country, or, rather, they swarmed, for things are greatly changed. A way out of Darkest Germany has been found, and not only found, it has been trodden these ten years by an ever-increasing crowd of the submerged, many of whom are

being landed in positions of self-help and thrift. That stone wall was the first lifeboat going out after them into the surge.

Social distress had reached its height in Germany with the reaction setting in upon what is known as the *Gründer Jahre**—the years of speculative enterprise, more sanguine than solid, and best described as "bubbles"—following upon the national renascence after the Franco-German war. Money had become more plentiful, trade and commerce more active; speculation grew giddy, and presently there was a collapse. Thousands were thrown out of work. The rural population in masses, seized with the fever of the day, had left the fields for the manufacturing centres, wishing to better themselves, and dreaming of wealth. But the years of plenty were followed by the lean years, leaving a floating population, not so much "submerged" as caught on a wave of misery heaving to and fro in the land. Moreover, there were *wandernde Handwerksburschen*—journeymen artisans, on the tramp for work—a time-honoured institution, but much degenerated. Beggars abounded.

Says Pastor von Bodelschwingh, "It always was a habit with us that poor wayfarers knocking at the door of our colony, now at this house, now at that, obtained relief; we never gave them money, but any distressed individual who asked for a meal had it, sitting down with his plateful at the hospitable doorstep. The good house-father or kindly house-mother, thus pitying him, believed firmly such feeding of the hungry, if

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* From "gründen," to found, to set going: the mercantile world all agog then for starting "paying concerns."

charity, was not charity abused ; a hungry man must be fed, be he ever so undeserving; and if the food was consumed under their own eyes, they were, at any rate, sure it was not being converted into money for drink. Their own hands were too full to watch these roving guests ; no one, for a time, noticed that the same man would return in a week, perhaps return a third time in a fortnight, and so on. Nor did they notice that public-houses in the neighbourhood throve and multiplied ; nor did any one think of keeping count that two or three dozen of these vagrants every day thus had their dinner at the several kitchens of Bethel, the distance between the houses concealing their numbers ; indeed, if any one had counted these visitors, you would still not have doubted it was rightful charity, for who could distinguish between the deserving poor and the vagabond who will not work? And if any of the wretched beggars pointed to the rags he wore, was it not merciful to give him a pair of boots that could be spared, or a shirt or coat? Who could tell that the selfsame man might appear all ragged again to-morrow at your neighbour's door to be fed and clothed, having sold what he had received at your pitying hands yesterday? When we grew more experienced in their ways, we discovered that some of these daily customers repeated that trick half a dozen times over ; we discovered that some of them went their systematic round of our kitchens, and having reached the last returned to begin again at the first. But," says Pastor von Bodelschwingh, "if a man will not work, he shall not eat—or rather, if we feed them, let them do some work."

Hammers and trowels were procured, and one hour's labour for a meal was asked of them. That stone wall

behind the Pastor's house—or, rather, its *idea*—was full of possibilities. It proved a test-wall; the daily band of starving pilgrims diminished wonderfully; instead of twenty or thirty, only half a dozen appeared, sometimes two or three only, willing to do a stroke of honest labour for the food one was ready to give them. Among the few those could plainly be distinguished who had never handled trowel or spade in their lives. These mostly were gratefully willing; they even returned, saying, "We will gladly do this work we are not used to, if only you will keep us." Then where should they be housed—some of them in rags which had not seen a stitch or soap and water for weeks and months? They must be kept from the public-house. The good housefathers were ready to receive them; "only not in this condition," they said. The men must first be newclothed. How was it to be done? Why, they must give work for clothes, as they gave work for food. And thus that wall grew.

But this wall is the beginning of the LABOUR COLONY, WILHELMSDORF, *based on a principle first laid down in the building of that wall.*

The winter of 1881 was a peculiarly hard one, and band after band arrived starving, in rags, and willing to work for food, for clothes. They came in such numbers that Bethel could not keep them all—the most needy, the most starving, were those asked to stay. "Would to God," said a hungry vagrant bitterly, "would to God we too were epileptic, then you would keep us!" That went to the pastor's heart. "I will try and keep you — find work for you," he said. And he went prospecting.

You follow the bending course of the valley in a

south-eastern direction, and presently it opens out into a sandy plain, some thirty miles long and ten broad, running along the western slopes of the Teutoburger Forest, and known to geologists as the "Gulf of Münster." The German Ocean, in bygone ages, rolled its waves here. It is called the Senne (or Sende), for it is a vast tract of sand. Nothing indigenous but coarse grass or heather, and stunted fir trees. If you examine that soil you find at a depth of from two to four feet the cause of its natural unproductiveness—a stratum of ochreous deposit, a bog iron ore, nowhere more than a few inches thick, but hard as iron; no root or sucker of plant can pierce it, and it lets no moisture through. A farm dotted here and there struggles against this barren soil. If you dig deep enough to turn up that layer, leaving it exposed to the air, it soon disintegrates; and if you examine it presently, you find a powdery ferruginous earth, a rich natural manure, changing your sandy waste into fruitful soil. This, however, presupposes toilsome labour, and does not pay the ordinary farmer. But it would "pay" Bodelschwingh, who could bring a peculiar capital to bear, called Charity, and who was in search of labour of a peculiar kind.

Here was a problem: a soil "submerged" ages ago, but fit to be reclaimed, and a "submerged" humanity struggling in the waters of social distress, but capable of being reclaimed,—why not set the one to reclaim the other? This, too, was reciprocity—a grand inspiration, a stroke of genius. Bodelschwingh set the two forces at one another—the latent productiveness of the soil, and the latent labour capacity of these starving men, and in the course of ten years that Senne has become a garden: a stratum is turned up, and a sunk stratum of men,

hundreds of them, are "turned up" in the process—up to that higher level of thrift and industry whence they have fallen. This, too, is geology.

Having completed his investigations, Pastor von Bodelschwingh called together the magistrates and leading men of the province and unfolded his plans. He made a speech which first startled them, and then startled the country. His speeches are always simple in the extreme, but to the point. His voice carries conviction, and there is that in his face and bearing which captivates. He is so simple, so unpretending, so modest, so humble, this nobleman born, this Doctor of Divinity, this Knight of St. John and three or four other orders which he never wears; he has no rhetoric, if thereby you mean fine language, polished style, clever exposition; he just talks to you, but that talk, like a swelling river with a resistless undercurrent, carries you along. "Love is the one motive power," he once said: "the question is, Have you a sufficiency of it?" He does not always lay bare that undercurrent when he addresses such meetings, but the unpretending pastor, with all his simplicity, on such occasion gives proof he is a ruler of men and a born political economist. He knows all about the social trouble, he knows the laws which exist and the laws which ought to exist; he knows, for the simple reason that he is so interested! He has the country's trouble at heart, her resources, her prospects, the whole situation, therefore, at his fingers' ends. His father was minister of finance and prime-minister, and if this pastor were not the humble servant of mercy, he, for administrative faculty, like the Bodelschwinghs before him, might have been the right hand of kings.

He gave that meeting a lesson in arithmetic. At the

lowest computation, there were then a hundred thousand unemployed begging their way through the land; and some estimated their numbers at a hundred and fifty, even two hundred thousand. The country has got to keep them, though it keep them only by beggar's pence. These fellows at the least beg their shilling a day; some with little trouble make their two shillings, even three and four shillings, daily, for they are practised in the trade. But even taking the lowest figures you have the net result of about two million pounds sterling a year collected by beggars, for the public-house mostly. "We could keep them all, house and clothe and feed them, at a tenth the present expense, if we gave them work, for that is what they want," suggested the pastor. "We must help them back to a thrifty, useful life. I propose to start a *Training Colony*, if the province will back me, and I promise that in the space of a couple of years the province will be rid of the pest."

Bodelschwingh is a sanguine man, full of optimistic views, if a great idea has a hold of him. He even promised the astonished magistrates that the example would be followed in no time, and that in sheer self-defence, by the other provinces; "for, look you," he said, "how was it with the fox in the fable? How does he, when he wants to rid his coat of certain inmates? He takes a bunch of hay between his teeth and slowly backs into the water, tail first: the lodgers he wants to be rid of, quitting his hind-quarters, seek refuge on his back, then on his shoulders, his head, and lastly in the hay-bunch. Then he drowns them all, dropping the hay, and walks away rejoicing. The moral is plain—we must rid our own province, the tail; the neighbouring provinces for a time will swarm the more: let them do then as we

have done—let each province start a colony of its own. Yet we are not going to drown all our poor fleas; those who will work shall work, and shall be helped, but the rest—every good-for-nothing one—will disappear; the country presently will be rid of them." Now, this was optimism of the purest water; the magistrates, the friends said so; but Bodelschwingh is a man who before then had shown people he might at least be trusted for an attempt. And though some laughed and others shook their heads, they did trust him. The province gave him a loan, a couple of thousand pounds free of interest, following it up with a further loan as the work grew.

The result proved that Pastor von Bodelschwingh was right. He started a labour colony for the unemployed of Westphalia and one or two neighbouring provinces; and what was begun in a side lane behind his own little manse, that rough stone wall, has grown and multiplied. By sheer force of example, Wilhelmsdorf has become the mother of five-and-twenty similar colonies all over Germany, and the great mass of starving vagrants, formerly accosting you at every turn, has practically disappeared from the country.

Land was bought in the Senne, and the old farm-house upon it renovated and enlarged. In March, 1882, a band of convalescent epileptics, farm labourers, went out from Bethel to form the nucleus of the labour colony, or rather to set about establishing it. But long before the place was ready for its intended occupants, news had gone like wildfire along the highways of Germany, and north, south, east and west, it was known among the tramping population that tables were being spread, a refuge opened for every hungry beggar, *if he would work*. On the whole, it was the most honest of the sunken

mass who first appeared—a man willing to be saved is already half saved—and the place soon was as full as it could hold. On August 17th, 1882, this colony was opened, a day to be held in remembrance by all who love the people, a birthday of "good-will unto men." The aged Emperor stood sponsor—it is after him that the first labour colony is named—and a few months later his noble son, the late Emperor Frederick, wrote a letter to Pastor von Bodelschwingh, accepting the Protectorate, in these words :—

"It is with the most gracious approval of my august father, His Majesty the Emperor and King, that I, in compliance with the desire of your Committee, herewith accept the Protectorate of the Labour Colony, Wilhelmsdorf, expressing the glad hope in doing so that this undertaking, which has set itself to combat a far-spread evil, will not only continue as successfully as it has begun, but that it may soon be imitated in other parts of our country, for the trouble is everywhere. The colony Wilhelmsdorf, though existing but a few months as yet, has already proved its efficiency in rescuing from utter perdition hundreds of the sunken and lost, leading them back to orderly and industrious lives. It is not too much, therefore, to say that you have started an institution deserving the sympathy and support of all among us who are anxious to further a healthy national development. It is not too much to say that this effort, independent of religious or political differences, should be the common cause of all who are striving to uphold the foundations, well aware of the clouds gathering overhead.

"FREDERICK WILLIAM,
"Crown Prince."

"BERLIN, *December 15th*, 1882."

Wilhelmsdorf, legally, is the property of Bethel, for to the epileptic colony, Bethel, as trustee of the fund, the loans in question were made. It is very beautiful that the first *human* loan, the first eighteen settlers, were from Bethel's own stricken children,—a number of epileptics capable of work. It is ever those who themselves have known trouble that are the fit helpers of others. These eighteen, indeed, themselves were being helped when, headed by a house-father, they went out into the Senne to make room there for the starving; for Bethel, at whose doors every year between two and three hundred fresh cases stand waiting for admittance, no longer had any room for them. The convalescents must leave her, and where should they go? Sending them back to the outer world and the less careful life too often means sending them back to their own old trouble. So here was a beautiful arrangement: let them help themselves by helping others. And when their work was done, when the call had gone forth from Wilhelmsdorf, "Come hither, ye homeless and starving, we have made room for you," these eighteen again became the nucleus of a settlement. Back to Bethel they could not go, but the Senne *has room*.

About a mile from the labour colony there was another broken-down farm. This too was acquired, and the eighteen settled there. They wanted a name for their new home, and they found it in the twenty-sixth chapter of Genesis. The farm-settlements in the Senne have always followed the chances of water, a little brook seeking its course through the sandy waste being the first condition of better things. That new home also had its brook; and when it was dedicated to its new destiny, the pastor gathered the eighteen and

read to them the story of Isaac, and his digging again the wells of water of his father Abraham, which the Philistines had stopped. Isaac too was homeless just then, and only when he got to the third well he might stay ; and he called it *Rehoboth*, saying, "For the Lord hath *made room* for us" And the eighteen called their new home *Rehoboth*, for now they "had room," and were able to make room for more of their brothers in affliction. Rehoboth now has room for about sixty convalescent epileptics, and as their numbers increase and further room is needed, further room yet will be made. And thus Bethel's convalescents, instead of returning to a precarious, unwatched, and too often unbefriended existence, have this beautiful refuge. It is easy to dig wells in the Senne ; water is bursting up everywhere—plentiful and clear, if you dig but ten or twelve feet ; and in the Senne the consolations of Christ's Programme are an ever-welling fountain ; patients and vagrants alike may sit down and drink. But the convalescents have ever since been working hand in hand with the moral "convalescents" of Wilhelmsdorf, reclaiming that barren soil ; with this difference only, that whereas of the former so far there are about fifty, there have on an average never been less than a hundred and fifty of the latter. Wilhelmsdorf "has room" for four hundred of the unemployed, and in winter time this number has often been reached.

Thus Love went out, found a desert and turned it into a garden.

CHAPTER IX

THE FARM COLONY

"There is room."

ABOUT a year (strictly speaking fifteen months) after the labour or training colony was first opened, a deputy magistrate paid a visit, and thus reported: "I found two hundred and twenty-five colonists, mostly occupied on the fields, and working cheerfully though it was pouring with rain. *They were of all classes*—men who had been in the army, men who had been to college. It is a mistake to think the out-of-work, the sunken and submerged, are of the lower ranks only. There was a former custom-house official among them, there was a man who had been in the civil service; there was another who had been a *Landwehr* officer, and one decorated, too, with the iron cross; there was a man who had served in Algiers, another who had been a well-to-do gentleman farmer, and another an inspector of a coal-mine; there was a surgeon, there were schoolmasters who had lost their pupils, there were clerks, waiters—in fact, there were all sorts and conditions of men. Here they were; they had come starving, they had come ragged. They were decently clothed now and looked well fed, and the work I found them doing was not play-work. A house-father and some brothers (deacons) are set over them, and you cannot help seeing

how these just live to be an example to them, help them, comfort them, show them how to work. I marvelled how such a number of by no means easy customers, considering their antecedents, could be managed as one family. About one-half of their number before coming here were "known to the police"; about one-fifth were actual convicts; but they apparently gave no trouble—the wheels of that queer household seem wonderfully oiled. I simply marvelled. (This magistrate forgot there is an oil called brotherly kindness.) There are strict rules to be observed in the colony, but there is no punishment. They are spoken to if insubordinate, they are exhorted, and if that avails not, they are just dismissed; yet a man rarely need be dismissed,—they are thankful enough to obey while in the colony. During the first fourteen months 1,200 in all have been admitted. Of these, only 42 (3½ per cent. that is) ran away from the colony; 966 left for regular employment, and of these 830 have actually been placed by means of the Labour Committee in connection with the colony. The place, the houses, everything is a pattern of cleanliness. The men are well cared for, the food is of the simplest, but sufficient and wholesome—rather above the provisioning of the army—for these men arrive starving, and as labour at once is required of them, they must be fed up."

The figures have not continued quite so favourable as in this report, and for the simple reason that the earlier colonists were of the better sort of the unemployed. Those who first came to be helped were the most worthy of help, the most capable of being reclaimed; the percentage of men who had "come down in the world," and not always criminally, being larger at first than it is now.

These, by means of the colony, have largely found their way back to an honourable life, and the work, so to speak, is now amid a lower stratum.

But the figures of ten years are these: There are now twenty-six of these colonies in Germany—we should speak of twenty-two only, the four latest having only just been started; and of the twenty-two, *one* only, Wilhelmsdorf, is ten years old. About sixty thousand vagrants and men described as "unemployed" have passed through them. Of these, no doubt, the lesser proportion only has actually been saved, yet is it not a great thing that year by year so many thousands—say ten thousand yearly, now that so many colonies exist—are within the chances of being saved, are kept, taught, fed outwardly and inwardly; so many thousands who otherwise would rove about the country, starve, and do mischief? Is it not a great thing, if only one-fifth, if only one-tenth are saved? It is, of course, difficult to venture upon figures when you speak of being "saved." The lives of those leaving the colony cannot be followed up very far. The results of the whole rescue-work, as will appear presently, are gauged in a different way.

And, in any case, let the reader not take the word "saved" in the sense of the Salvation Army; they do not use the word in its highest meaning quite so freely in Germany. The good men at work at Bethel, and watching over the welfare of Wilhelmsdorf, know that "saving," in that sense, is of the Holy Ghost: it is not expected of these vagrants quite so readily as the change from their rags into clean clothes—this, too, is "saving." But the spiritual saving is growth, and a very slow growth sometimes. The influences of salvation are all about these men at Wilhelmsdorf; they are beset behind

and before with them ; they are so, because we all are : it is God's way—a way not always noticed, not always seen ; and they are so, because of the influences streaming in from Bethel. But these men are not saved wholesale : they do not undergo processes of kneeling down a sinner and rising up a saint. We do not say that such holy process is not God's way sometimes ; it was God's way with Paul ; but conversion is not made a condition at the labour colony. They are not asked much about their inward experiences—they are fed, cleansed, loved ; and the rest is left to the Love abounding They are taught too ; but those who teach them know that the teaching of the Spirit is required. They are prayed *with* —the day at Wilhelmsdorf begins with prayer and ends with prayer, as a family ; but there is no overdoing it—and a great deal more are they prayed *for*. If the labour colony has succeeded, it is because of the natural wholesome spirit pervading it. The thirteenth of the first of Corinthians is the great text-book in that house. There are indeed some entering the colony as prodigals who leave it children of their Father's house, but these things are not spoken of, not printed in the reports—those who manage these know better ; and if the word "saved" occurs in these pages, what is meant thereby is the change from the disorderly to the orderly life, a change back to industry, and very often to that humility for sins remembered to which a blessing pertains—a lifting up, in short, out of the mud.

It was a beautiful day in June when we first drove out to the Senne. The man who drove us was one of the original settlers—he had gone out with those eighteen—now employed as driver and farm servant at Bethel. He is but a homely, poor-bodied fellow—a simple

labourer—but he has managed an education somehow, if by education you mean insight and understanding. He would tell you all about the growth of the Senne—it is an "evolution," he said, an *Entwicklung*, actually using the word. We met him again, just before leaving; he had discovered meanwhile that there was an intention of telling English folk something of that *Entwicklung*. "May God give you a blessing upon it," he said; "for it is most important. It is like putting seed into the ground; if you tell them something about it, it may grow!" He is but a farm labourer, knowing about seed and growth and God's blessing, and he said it was "evolution."

After about an hour's drive, you saw you were getting into sand—sand right and left and before you—but a good firm road led through that sandy waste, a road made by the colonists. And presently you saw this waste, heather-grown only, and dotted with stunted firs, assume signs of cultivation, fields stretching away on either hand—and such fields!—and after another half-hour's drive, Wilhelmsdorf was reached. The colony owns about a thousand acres now, and some of the colonists are continually at work in trenches digging up that stratum.—there is work left for years to come, and when all is under cultivation, why, they can acquire more. There is room for growth in the Senne, room to spread. If you take up some of the subsoil, after it has been lying on the surface awhile, you find it a lump very much like chicory for colour and substance, crumbling to powder, too, at your touch, like a cake of chicory. The men are interested in showing it to you; they have quite a regard for the soil which costs them such honest sweat of the brow. Last year twenty-six additional

acres of land were brought under cultivation; they have mostly required a four-foot digging. There is a good deal of irrigation work, and of plantation making; road-making, too, goes on, and there is a flourishing live-stock. There being plenty of water, they are setting up a mill to do their own grinding, having their own bakery also.

Six hundred and twenty colonists were received last year, over six thousand having been registered in this colony since it first was opened.

Any one presenting himself is admitted, those of the province having first claim. The clothes he wears, if worth anything, which hardly ever is the case, are disinfected and put away against the time of his leaving; for every man, as a preliminary, is put into a new suit of clothes. This is a wonderful stroke of Christian genius: a man feels a new creature; he has put on respectability. But there is nothing of the uniform about these clothes; the men are not treated as convicts—not even as charity boys. They may choose what they fancy out of a large stock of clothing always on hand. And they generally choose in accordance with their former condition of life; so by their very clothes, and by their own doing, there is a sort of distinction of class in the colony. They have to pay for their clothes; money they have none, so the articles are given them on credit, against which their labour is set. A man then is no longer a beggar; he is beginning to work his way up, and, as a first step, he has to pay for his own new clothes. These clothes, serviceable and good, are cheap; they are given them at manufacturers' prices, the colony not making one penny upon the transaction. The men know that. At

manufacturers' prices; but these clothes are not made in wholesale factories at sweating labour. Pastor von Bodelschwingh has a wonderful knack of killing two birds with one stone. These clothes are made for the colony by all sorts of poor women in the neighbourhood, widows by preference; no middle-man is required, there is no "sweater" or anybody wanting to make any profit, so the poor seamstresses earn their decent penny, and yet the clothes are cheap. How full of little strokes of this kind is the economy of Bethel! And what a head that man must have!—but it is his heart rather than his head which does such thinking.

The colonist signs a contract on entering the colony, one clause of which says that the clothes are not his property till he has fully worked for them; and that he is acting feloniously, and will be prosecuted for thieving, if he runs away with his new clothes unpaid for. And this is no false threat: it does not happen often; but if a man thus robs the colony, the police are forthwith communicated with. The men know that, and probably honour the place the more. Indeed, the contract they sign is exceedingly strict in many ways. For instance, by signing it they agree that they have no claim whatever to any remuneration beyond their food, though they do eight, ten, and, in harvest time, twelve hours a day. They agree that whatever is given them over and above their food, that even the work provided, is a free gift, and found for them by the kindness of those who would help them. Thus the colonists at once are taught that eating one's own bread, that is, bread one has honestly worked for, is a possession and a blessing in itself. They are treated as men capable of appreciating that blessing. During the first fortnight they

receive no wages. Then they receive twopence-halfpenny a day; after a month, if they work well, they get fivepence, but never any more if they work by the day. For the colony is a bridge towards better times, and not —as, for instance, the socialists would have it—an institution for supplying a man with work on public responsibility. The work provided for them is the benefit, the gain lying in the work, not in the pay.

Nor are these wages ever given to the men; the money is booked for them, and if there is a surplus, over and above the clothes to be paid for, such surplus is not handed over to them even on their leaving, else public-houses would spring up all around and catch the men in a body as soon as the colony has dismissed them. If the men go into a situation on leaving, their little savings are remitted to the care of their new employer; if they go to seek work, the sum is sent by post-office order to any address they can name at a safe distance. For provision along the road they are directed to the "*Verpflegungs-station*," (of which anon,)* or, as the case may be, a railway ticket to their destination is given them at their own expense.

The colony endeavours to encourage piece-work, especially when the men do more than eight hours a day; for thus the diligent man gets more than the loiterer, and industry is inculcated. Also piece-work, singling out the laborious man from the idler, enables the former to repay the colony the sooner for the clothes given. And once this stage is reached—requiring some months, of course, even with an industrious man, if he has been fully clad—the battle towards respectability

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* *Vide* p. 145.

generally is won, and the man may be drafted back to the outer world. For the colony is not only a helper in distress, it is also a labour agency, assisting the men to regular employment elsewhere; and the sooner this can be effected, the sooner others may be received in their place.

There is a healthy look about the men, and if you talk to them they express themselves satisfied. It is hard work, but it is just as hard as it should be, and it is what they are told they have come for. Most are thankful for the well-ordered life—it is luxury considering the life left behind.

There is of course perfect discipline, although really there is no one to enforce it. At 5.30 of a summer morning the men have had their breakfast, and are standing in rows in the farmyard, awaiting the house-father's telling them off for the day's work, every troop going its way with an overseer—not a slave-driver but a man to keep them to their work by *just working with them:* it is a brother of Nazareth, not to *talk* religion to them, but to *act* religion before them, and be their example. He keeps up the cheerful tone, and shows them the beauty of work. They may get religion along with that, but unconsciously. There is a time for every thing, is the order at Wilhelmsdorf, and there is a time for saving, even for soul-saving—by the sweat of the brow. Besides the fields surrounding, there is a beautiful garden producing a variety of vegetables, strawberries and other fruit. Walking about, you would see a fine nursery of fruit trees bursting with their first blossoms after being grafted. The colonist who had done that grafting was watching his work with evident love for the saplings, and maybe he was learning something of the

new life, and the pruning away of old sins. At any rate he had it there before him in nature, and he looked like a man pruned—one would not ask him. Yet this man had been a ragged tramp, an habitual out-of-work, and had been in the house of correction for loafing and disorderly doings. He had been nearly a year at Wilhelmsdorf, when he did that grafting.

Much of course depends on the house-father, and Wilhelmsdorf has a house-father and house-mother after Bodelschwingh's own heart. There was a soldier in the Franco-German war, a peasant's son of the Ravensberger Land, who, pressed by the enemy one day, vowed a vow, if he should be spared, to consecrate his life. On returning to his native village, he found that on that very day, his father, with an old friend (none other than blind Heermann !), had been on their knees for hours, praying for their soldier lad, moved with a sense of his danger. This man, Meyer by name, returned to his calling—he was bailiff on a large property. Several years passed, and he had not redeemed his vow—he did not "quite know how." One day a *Missionsfest* was announced, a special missionary gathering, at which Pastor von Bodelschwingh was to speak. Meyer had heard of Bodelschwingh, but he had never heard or seen him, and was anxious for that treat. So he took a holiday from his farm labour—he was away on the Rhine—and went. Bodelschwingh probably that day, with his usual warmth, pleaded for labourers in the vineyard. Meyer was conscience-stricken, and offered himself to Bodelschwingh for one year's collector's work* at his own expense. This,

* *Vide* p. 231.

some one had told him, might be his thank-offering. But Bodelschwingh looked at him—"Stay your year by all means," he said: "perhaps you will stay altogether. I want a house-father for the unemployed—one who can teach them how to work." And this is how the first labour colony came by the man to whom most of the outward success is due.

Meyer is a splendid farmer, and a true-hearted Christian. And there is a house-mother—he found her only after he had decided for that work—his true helpmeet. That simple couple manage these hundreds of degenerate men; and everything is in order, everything under authority, everything cared for. One wonders how—but there it is, one cannot help seeing it. Everything as it should be. It needs but a look at the place, and seeing is believing. That quiet house-mother in her kitchen, with only three young servant-maids under her, managing such a household! Everything is spick and span, the colonists supplying rough labour—a plain farmhouse kitchen, with saucepans like engine boilers, clean as a drawing-room, and the little housewife explaining to you, as you follow her wonderingly, how she is ever trying to do well by the men, yet not increasing expenses. There is no law as to expenses, no rule laid down to guide her—"so you have to satisfy *your own conscience both ways*," she says; and surely all is as it should be. Her contrivances bear examining. That kitchen would cost double in this country, and not turn out more satisfactory food. *Conscience* and *heart* are two wonderful possessions in such a house-mother—a wealth in themselves; spending wealth, that is kindness, yet keeping under expenses. No one who works along with Pastor von Bodelschwingh is under any law, save that one law,

"Do it as unto God," and this is how the colony works.

Dining with the labour colony of course was a novel experience; but having walked about all the morning, one was ready to share labourers' fare. The Crown Prince once had done so, refusing any extra culinary attention, and Bodelschwingh always sits down with his *Wilhelmsdörfer* when he visits the colony. But you might have been in a Trappist cloister for silence. They had done an honest morning's work—hard work—and ate with a will. It was with a strange sensation, even with a lump in one's throat, one watched these men; they all looked alike, some a little more heavy than others, some a little more wistful than others—not much difference; and yet one knew that side by side with the cottage-born outcast, here one and there one, were those not born to be there—men of gentle birth and training, who had come hither by the way of transgressors, which is hard. As one scanned their countenances, one could not say there was bitterness among them, nor did they look cowed, but rather humbled, and thankful for their food. Who can tell what goes on in the hearts of these men? A Psalm is read after dinner, and then they have an hour to themselves, the midday rest.

Mrs. Meyer has five little children, rosy and fair, growing up among these outcasts—a happy family of their own. The house-father kindly gave up a whole afternoon to our inquiries, though it was harvest time; and one learned much of him. His unostentatious ways, his real piety, his honest manhood, and affection for his large family, help one to understand how this rescue work is done. His eye is everywhere—a simple, guileless eye, but nothing seems hidden from it—and obedience

to him seems, not the law, but the natural condition of the place. The men—remember they are a collection of vagabonds of all ages between sixteen and sixty—all call him "House-father." How much there is in that one word to educate these men!

Wilhelmsdorf has not only its fields to show, but also a fine live stock. They began ten years ago with two cows; there are now about fifty, all bred and reared in the colony; horses, also, some of them the house-father's pride; and last, but not least, Master Bacon and family—such a tribe of them. There is a pattern swineherd, too, one of the colonists, a regular Wamba—Gurth, we ought to say, but somehow he reminded us of Wamba. The man is over seventy, but if ever you go to Wilhelmsdorf, be sure and watch him. "Aren't they darlings?" he said, showing his herd—there must have been nearly a hundred, old and young, boar, sow, and sucking-pigs, and they did look flourishing. He has a way of cluck-clucking for them, quite tenderly, like a hen for her chickens, and they come running after him, rolling and waddling—there appears to be room for affection even in a pig. He at least said, "You have got to love them else they won't thrive!" He was right, if his meaning was, "*whatsoever thou doest, do it with all thine heart.*"

He is quite a character, that man, tall and lean, with a long white beard, wearing an indigo-coloured blouse with a leather belt. Call him Wamba? he is more like that honest old swineherd of the *Odyssey*, in whom Homer delighted. He has been in the colony some six or seven years, so is quite a fixture, old and useless as the world goes, yet surely earning his bread. He is a Roman Catholic, and it so happened when the priests

started a colony of their own persuasion, poor old Wamba was induced to report himself there. He went. But farm colonies are no houses of detention, and before long he presented himself again at Wilhelmsdorf, asking for re-admission, was received and for the rest was silent. A visiting magistrate after awhile got it out of him: "Why did you not stop at Maria Veen?—that's the place for you!"—"Didn't like the food," says Wamba. "Oh no, surely," urged the visitor, "the monks cook well, besides we don't pamper you here." "No," says Wamba, "but the pigs is cared for. . . . You see," he broke out, "them monks is always a-praying, and that church bell never stopped. *I could nohow do my duty by their pigs*—and that's why I came back!" And so to this day, a queer-looking solitary man, he is doing "his duty" by the bristly creatures which are kith and kin to him, he having neither kith nor kin left elsewhere.

There are several "fixtures" of that sort at Wilhelmsdorf. A son of a pastor is there, having no one left to care for him, and who, in consequence of an illness, has grown deaf and dazed, but who is earning his bread honestly on the farm—a "faithful soul," said the house-father. What more can a man be, even at Wilhelmsdorf, than faithful?

Wamba's opinion as above given has not been recorded to disparage the Roman Catholic training colony, but rather to show his own affection and loyalty for Wilhelmsdorf, which had first taken him in. Wilhelmsdorf, as the original colony, fitly stands as a type; moreover, it is the only one of which these pages may speak from personal observation. Maria Veen does good work, both agriculturally and as a rescue agency, among

the Roman Catholic part of the population. It was opened three years ago, and has registered about six hundred inmates.

It were necessary, perhaps, to visit the several colonies in order to get a comprehensive impression of the completeness and thoroughness of the undertaking; certainly in order to grasp fully the whole machinery in its details. It so happened that a Frenchman has done so, a M. Georges Berry, deputed by the Paris Municipal Council. France had heard of these colonies, and, standing face to face with her own social question, delegated a commission, headed by M. Berry, to consult her neighbour across the Rhine. Now, no one will accuse Frenchmen of a natural leaning to enhance the merits of that neighbour; and going from colony to colony, this commission in duty bound will have examined things with a critical eye; but their report, written purely for the Paris Municipal Council, is a fine feather in their neighbour's cap. M. Berry prefaces his *Bulletin* with the admirable remark: "*Il y a beaucoup à apprendre chez les Allemands, mais peu à prendre*"—*i.e.*, "We have much to learn from these Germans, but we cannot just copy them!" His report, however—quite a pamphlet, soberly written—is brimful of the sincerest approval; and returning to his own Paris, he urges his fellow councillors not to "copy," but *to do likewise*.

He describes several of the colonies minutely, especially the Berlin colony, which is an industrial one, and the one at Magdeburg which is both industrial and agricultural. This latter was started in 1888, and according to this Frenchman is not only in splendid working order, but is actually a "paying concern," due to the fact that it is situated on ground for which only a nominal

rent, so far, was paid, and which now, at a nominal price, is about to become the property of the colony. This colony for the second year of its existence has paid its way, even with a surplus—the result chiefly of market gardening.

We inquired of House-father Meyer how Wilhelmsdorf stood in this respect; and he told us, if he never had more than a hundred mouths to feed, Wilhelmsdorf would in time be self-supporting. Be it remembered the land in question has first to be reclaimed; surely this is no small measure of success, if along with such soil-reclaiming one can feed a hundred labourers, and yet see one's way to being self-supporting! But Wilhelmsdorf in the winter, when work is slack has been feeding three and four hundred men at times, finding occupation for them purely for their own sake. These numbers, however, have lessened, as other colonies rose to do their part. Two hundred to two hundred and fifty inmates is the normal winter figure now. The whole capital sunk in the Senne, including Rehoboth and several other stations, is about fifteen thousand pounds, and Wilhelmsdorf has a yearly subsidy of fifteen hundred—at most two thousand pounds. These are modest figures, considering it means the "saving" of hundreds of men year by year and reclaiming land which year by year gains in value! And the province is not out of pocket by making these grants, but very much to the contrary. In all these colonies a certain number of the submerged get sufficiently reclaimed to be put into positions of trust on the working-staff; some in the offices, others supplying the machinery of the household. In fact, these colonies do answer, and in a very real sense they pay.

A further development of the system is the *Heimat Colonie* near Bremerhaven, which purposes to receive selected cases from all the other colonies—men who by industry and good behaviour have proved their claim to further help. These are to be settled at that "*Own Home Colony*" on little plots of land, having to work their way into possession, something after the fashion of "Workman's Home" (of which anon); except that their own labour is the purchase money. A certain Pastor Cronemeyer is the mover of this extension scheme; but it is just a development of Pastor von Bodelschwingh's own grand idea of a "*hearth and threshold of his own" for every deserving man*, as the truest means of salvation in earthly things. It is premature to judge of this further project; but as to its principle—who could question its wisdom in these days of social democracy? And, therefore, there is little doubt but that it will be worked out aright, and that its own measure of success presently will speak for it.

We will conclude this chapter with a Christmas scene in one of the colonies, reported by a chance visitor

There are good voices among the colonists—why should there not be?—and for weeks, encouraged by the house-father, there is much practising of the carols and Christmas hymns, which even these outcasts remember from the days of their childhood when they had mothers to teach them, or at any rate attended a school. What silent chords these carols and hymns may touch! What memories of brighter, purer days! And through the long December evenings these songs ring out into the wintry night. And day after day the postman, never failing, brings parcel upon parcel; friends of the friendless far

and near remembering these strangers. All sorts of useful things are sent, and even pretty things, little fingers here and there filling the pockets of the *Christ-kind* for the cheering of the homeless colonists. There is much poetry in the Fatherland about Christmas time, and the Christ Child is busy. And they of the colony, life-hardened, aye sin-hardened though they be, feel something of the breath blowing about them. Even they look for Christmas; who does not, though his world seem all empty of love?

And on Christmas Eve they are busy from an early hour in the day; evergreens and fir branches have been brought in by the cartload, and the whole house is hung with garlands. And then the colonists, like children, are turned out of the room; the Christmas tree, as tall as the room will hold, is brought in for the house-father and house-mother to decorate. And when the doors open at nightfall upon this family there is a sea of light: the message of a German Christmas tree is all light—the Light that came into the world.

They had put up a picture at the foot of that tree, transparent and illumined from behind—Ludwig Richter's beautiful picture representing the stable and the manger and the shepherds kneeling before the Child. And silence fell on these men, these colonists—they in the background, and the house-father's little children in front beneath the tree. And the children's voices sang the children's hymn of the angels, and shepherds, and the flocks by night. The house-father thereupon, turning to the second chapter of St. Luke, read the old old story, yet ever new—new to these men that night. And then they had their presents, each man what love had provided—a love he knew not, and yet it

remembered him—an earthly friend's love, to tell him of a Love beyond.

And so, even at a labour colony, there is Christmas Eve; the more solemn strain changing into merriment and laughter and nut-cracking, and rejoicings over the unexpected gifts.

The visitor present asked that house-father was there a true blessing? Foolish question: when eyes grow bright or shine with the hidden tear, when the touch of love quivers through the soul, when rough men stand in holy silence because the hush of Eternity is upon them, will you want to *see* the blessing with your earth-bound eyes?

CHAPTER X

DARKEST GERMANY TRAMPING

"Compel them to come in."

THE labour colonies throughout Germany, though each an independent institution, act hand-in-hand, forming a moral leverage of growing power. It is by Pastor von Bodelschwingh's indefatigable efforts that this united action has come about; he knows that union is strength, and to him it is mainly due that a central committee, to which each local committee sends a representative, is now in full working order, with headquarters in Berlin. Count Zieten-Schwerin is President, and there are regular sessions to consider the weal and woe of the unemployed, investigating and comparing the experiences and results of the several colonies established for their benefit, and being ever on the look-out for improvement. They issue a monthly magazine called *The Wanderer*, and publish the reports and balance-sheets of all the colonies. Thus, what by mercy and charity is done in a corner, is proclaimed on the house-top for the nation at large to watch and to know. Every penny is accounted for, and whoever cares may know exactly what is being done.

These labour colonies are semi-private undertakings, invariably set on foot by private action; there is always a grant by the province or country to start them, and

subsidies are continued to them according to the need they set themselves to combat, but a great deal is done by voluntary effort and free-will contribution locally. Each colony is a provincial institution, yet they render the most public account of themselves year by year. This is one reason why they prosper; they are to all intents and purposes a public organisation for the good of the people, benefiting not only the unemployed, but the country itself.

And it is a powerful organisation, quietly spreading a net over the land—over Darkest Germany at least; it has a hold upon the vagabonds. A man's antecedents are tolerably known at the colonies; for on first presenting himself, although his own deposition is taken, it is not implicitly relied on. Wilhelmsdorf, for instance, employs a special secretary, himself a saved character, whose business it is to identify any applicant with his past. This is possible in a country like Germany; you have but to send a letter of inquiry to that man's *Heimath*—his home-parish. A man's "home" in the eye of the law, firstly, is the place of his birth and early upbringing, but, secondly, any place where he was domiciled for two years and upwards. Also any town or village where he has been at work will have registered him and his doings for the time being. A man can be traced in Germany, and the labour colonies generally surprise their inmates after two or three weeks by *knowing all about them*, especially if there are things a man would prefer to hide, such as having been in prison. This may be a curious revelation to the free-born Briton, but it is not altogether amiss, for if the country has a hold of you, you also have a hold of the country; and if you are an honest man in trouble,

your home-parish, even of two years' residence only,* has certain duties towards you ; meanwhile you certainly are under control. A man here is known to the police only if he misbehaves himself ; in Germany he cannot be long in any place without being duly registered. It is the paternal government.

But to return to the colony. A man on leaving is not altogether allowed to drift. He may leave any day, even if in no wise a saved character, the duration of his stay at the colony being quite voluntary, except for the conditions of the contract he has signed ; but on leaving he carries with him a *Wanderschein* (vagrancy certificate) to which more explicit reference will be made, further on,† and by means of which, if he chooses to avail himself of assistance by the way, his intermediate life can be followed up. Also, if he misbehaves himself at one colony, or if he leaves feloniously with clothes unpaid for, this is made known to all the other colonies ; he is entered in the "black book," as even the vagrants call it. This black book, a sort of outside conscience, acts as a wholesome restraint.

It is indeed a fact that a net of guardian helpfulness, quietly but steadily, is spreading over Darkest Germany, gathering in the vagabonds, of which net the labour colonies only form a part. The colonies, so to speak, are the lowest rung of the ladder by which the

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* The labour colonies, for instance, never keep a man longer than one year and eleven months, after which he is sent away, with permission to return. If they kept him over two years they would be *bound* to provide for him—he would become *heimaths-berechtigt*, entitled to claim his "home" in the colony ; not that many do stay to that length of time.

† *Vide* p. 148.

unemployed may climb back to the hopeful life; they are for men who *have* sunk, who *are* submerged. But what if one could prevent their sinking? what if one could carry the labour-seeking population along the high roads, helped and cheered—helping them to food, keeping them from drink, assisting them to work, thus cheering them? Then they need not sink. And is prevention not better than cure? It is being done.

Natural-verpflegungs-station, even with hyphens, is a dreadful word, and quite untranslatable; it means an open door for the unemployed tramp, where he will find relief in kind. These stations—we will call them relief stations for short—form the great network we have spoken of; they are found all over Germany, an essential part of the whole system for aiding the unemployed. That German name, long as it is, does not fully describe them, leaving out the important fact that these stations do not treat the vagrant as a pauper simply; he is expected to work for the relief provided, and, if he is an honest labour-seeker, his search is assisted. These stations operate in connection with the labour colonies. The English reader will scarcely believe it, but there are close upon *two thousand** of them in Germany—to be correct, they number at this moment 1967, being added to continually—open to any labour-seeking, moneyless individual, and costing the country the nowise heavy sum, considering, of a million and a half of marks yearly (£75,000).

The relief stations have their origin in a law of the

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* Since the above was first written, they have been reduced by some hundreds, which only shows that, doing their work, the need for them diminishes!

State, then introduced, which provides that every German subject in distress may at least claim one night's lodging and one day's food at the hands of the parish within whose boundaries he may happen to be. (Of that "home-parish" above-mentioned he may claim more under certain conditions). Says Pastor von Bodelschwingh, "*Who, then, is in distress, if not the man driven to beg because there is no one to employ him?*"

Now, these stations, first thought of in Würtemberg, South Germany, to combat house-to-house begging, have passed through various phases: they were approved and disapproved by public opinion, and they were not at first in every instance what true charity would have them be. But there was a power at work to shape them, to draw them into a system, and though they are still in some respects in a transition state they are fast becoming a high-road along which "Darkest Germany" is passing with increasing benefit.

It was Pastor von Bodelschwingh who, at a home mission congress in 1883, moved "the organic unity of all labour colonies and relief stations throughout the Empire"; it was in answer to this appeal that the Central Committee at Berlin, already spoken of, was formed, and has ever since been working for that end. He pleaded: "The labour colonies are the provision of charity for the sunken, but it is truer charity to prevent a man from sinking, and the colonies will be simply swamped if there is not a systematic effort throughout the country for assisting the honest unemployed in search of work. A man shall not beg; he can give half a day's work for a day's food and a night's lodging, and he shall be driven to seek the labour colony only when his clothes are in rags. To be a true relief station

every such station must be a labour agency. The unemployed *will* tramp the country; hold your hand over them, help them to be honest tramps, keep them from the public-house, assist their search for work. Put them under a certain discipline for the benefit they receive, and the results in time will be marvellous"

This, then, is the present state of affairs concerning the unemployed in Germany Along the great high roads—north, south, east, and west—there are *Natural-verpflegungs-stationen*, at a distance one from another of half a day's march. The unemployed scarcely can help tramping, let them tramp in stages; they will fall in with the plan if they know dinner is awaiting them and a night's rest. The morning is for tramping, the afternoon for work as a rule, though the [illegible] and other circumstances may modify the arrangement. The work shall not be considered dishonouring, and though it be stone-breaking, a man is not a pauper for that; but at most stations they provide the more welcome labour of wood-chopping. These unemployed largely make the firewood for the Fatherland A man arrives by mid-day, has his dinner—most plain, of course, but wholesome and sufficient—and then he must do his required amount of work; then he has supper, a social evening with brethren in distress; no drink, and a decent bed in the dormitory. Next morning he has breakfast, and go he *must*, his dinner is at the next station. Only over Sunday two nights are allowed, and on Sunday of course the vagrant is a guest, free of work.

A beautiful arrangement, says the English reader, but how do you prevent this from becoming a gigantic

system of abuse, pampering the out-of-work instead of really aiding him, furthering vagrancy instead of suppressing it? Well, in this way: a man may not tramp as he likes; he must tramp in strict order from station to station—that is why the stations are planned to be within an able man's walking distance, and there is no turning aside, no doubling back upon your road. A man, setting out, say, from Cologne to Berlin, under pretence of seeking labour, is received at the first station—indeed, at any station—be he an honest labour-seeker or not, for who can tell? But on leaving the first station the *Wanderschein* is handed him, the vagrancy certificate: a little book, paged and ruled into squares, a sort of blank diary. In the first [illegible] square, the first station which gave relief enters its stamp [illegible] and date; the second square must be filled by the next station in the order of the road, and so forth; and if your tramp turns aside from his appointed, indeed self-appointed, way, the next station will not receive him—this is his discipline: and if he arrives at the last stage as unhelped as when he started, that is without having found regular employment (every station being a labour agency), he is likely to be a man who will not work, and the house of correction *may* receive him in the end. For at the stations any employer of the district makes known his want of hands, and a man who can and will work need not tramp for ever. The *Wanderschein*, also, is valid for two or three months only, after which it has to be renewed; and it would not be renewed without inquiring into a prolonged want of employment. The inveterate out-of-work is thus brought to book.

These stations partly keep themselves by the men's labour, the deficiency being borne by the respective districts, at a great saving to the public purse, always remembering it is cheaper to aid your beggar than let him beg. And it is a wondrously merciful arrangement: an unemployed man in Germany positively, by means of these stations, can travel through the length and breadth of the empire *without having one penny in his pocket.* He is fed and taken in for the night in return for the work he gives. His clothes are not replenished; if he tramps himself into rags, the next stage is the colony.

These relief stations in the course of the year thus receive for a night's lodging and a day's food thousands upon thousands of labour-seeking vagrants, making them work for their absolute necessities, keeping them from the need of begging, and largely from the public-house, till regular work is found. The night's lodgings given last year amounted to about three million; or, in other words, some eight thousand vagrants, on an average, are in these refuges daily. And although such a gigantic system of regulated helpfulness cannot be free from abuse, yet the use is greater than the abuse—the men are at least under discipline.

But Pastor von Bodelschwingh and other friends of the movement are not fully satisfied with the existing state of things. They want to see these stations lifted to a higher level, bringing Christian influence to bear as much as possible; they want to unite the relief stations with another organisation for labour-seeking wanderers —to see them work in connection with the *Herbergen zur Heimath.*

What are these?

Again we fail to translate the designation. A *Herberge* is a place for a traveller to put up at—an inn, if you like, only not just an inn. If you take a wayfarer to your fireside you are giving him *herberge*—"harbouring" him. There is a touch of poetry about this word, a touch of welcome home; it is an old-world German word, before inns were public-houses And *Heimath* means just "home": the whole appellation, therefore, meeting the wanderer's eye on a signboard, says to him: "Put up here; we will try and make it a home." And for whom this home? For *wandernde Handwerks-burschen*, — journeymen artisans travelling for work. If the stations just spoken of are the second rung of the ladder, the *Herbergen* are the third, a step higher still; for there a man, though taken in by Christian helpfulness, is not just taken in by charity. He pays his honest penny, and can therefore stay at his will, that is, till the employment he seeks is found.

Home-lovers as the Germans are, there is a migratory impulse in the people; and ever since the Middle Ages the young artisan, having served his apprenticeship, took stick and knapsack and went *auf die Wanderschaft* —a travelling—on foot of course, now stopping here with a master of the craft, now there, thus gaining skill and experience. Indeed, by the guild rules a man could not himself aspire to be a master, establishing a work-shop of his own, until he had had at least three years of this itinerant practice of the craft. He was now a *Geselle*, a "fellow." There was much that was beautiful about this life in the good old times: it was the young man's first experience of the larger life, the wider horizon. What though he tore himself away from an affectionate father, from a loving mother, the world was

bright, he was uncorrupt and could pass along the highways uncorrupted. Not that temptation was wanting; temptation might be part of his training, but temptation did not stalk the highways hand in hand with starvation. The world was not so crowded as it now is, and if there was no work to be had in one village, there was the more chance of finding it in the next, the mediæval town and city being the high school where the *Geselle* graduated. The *Geselle* was not, like his modern representative, merely the paid workman, who sells his day's work for the day's wage, no one caring two straws for his human needs, or having a kindly interest in his off-hours. The *Geselle* in those days was an inmate of the master's family,—the master might have half a dozen of them sitting at his table and sleeping beneath his roof, and the master's wife, the *Frau Meisterin*, was a good mother to them, mending their clothes too; and sometimes the master had a pretty child, a growing daughter for the *Geselle* to win. These were the good old days, the days of poetry and of warmth; nowadays we have grown colder, the day's wage is all one expects, and the journeyman's chances of his share of the home life are poor.

But though the heart has died out of this old institution, the habit has survived, and *wandernde Handwerks-burschen*—journeying artisans—to any number are within the memory of the present generation A portion of them might be honest and keep honest but the century of railroads and of machinery, of overstocking and consequent dearth of labour, has sadly demoralised the *Handwerks-bursch*. He, even, in these days of railroad and steam, departed from the old appellation, calling himself a *Reisender*, a traveller, and

presently he was an "armer" *Reisender*, a "poor" traveller, accosting you as such, an awful vision of rags and unkemptness at every turn. They no longer wandered for labour, they tramped for beggar's pence, and had them largely. In such numbers they trod the country, *streaming* along the highways, that the word *Stromer* came into use for them. They grew desperate, and people, in villages at least and in lonely country places, were more afraid of them. The "streamers" were the pest of the land till within a dozen years ago; half the crimes committed of highway robbery, of violence, even of murder, were by the hand of some *Stromer*. They were starving, to be sure. At first they got no work, and then they would not work. They had their own experience of the battle of life; *fechten* (to fight) was their slang for begging, and thus "fighting" they throve—throve sufficiently at least to lead a terrible life from gin shop to gin shop, the publican in his turn, like a vampire, thriving on the *Stromer*. And if there was an honest *Handwerks-bursch* among them, he soon got corrupted in these places of drink, and worse things, by day and by night. Where were such to go for a bed? The owners of the low lodging-houses were their masters in wickedness, and kept them to it for their own gain. It was there they obtained a list of all the houses in the neighbourhood where a good-natured wife or a careless and frightened servant might be expected to give—give money, or food and clothes, the food and clothes being money too, and saleable for drink. This was the life.

The following pen-and-ink portrait, as graphic as pitiful, is from the pen of a well-known German writer, and the Englishman abroad before 1880 will readily

recognise the likeness; he will have seen similar figures at every turn in his travels. Says our author: "The vagabond's face is a study—a mixture of sadness, of hopelessness, of peevish discontent, with a glare of hatred sometimes and of bitter sarcasm about his mouth. Of whom his hatred,—of himself, or his neighbour who *has* a home? Is it regret eating away at his heart, repentance? is it good intentions—those never kept *intentions* with which he his paving his road to hell? Yet I pity the man—he is so wretched, so forlorn, I would like to say a word to him, comfort him, whisper a word of advice. I scarcely dare. 'Poor fellow, are you unwell?' I venture at last; 'can I help you in any way?' He fails to comprehend; he stares at me; there is wonder, there is distrust in his gaze—why should I want to help him? I meet his gaze, hoping for a chance of reading this riddle of a soul, of understanding something of this walking misery. But no! the man has sunk too deep even for sympathy! It is beyond his comprehension that another human being might want to enter into his feelings, beyond his comprehension that he might ease his own heart by unburdening it. One thing he does comprehend. Rising heavily from the stone seat on which I found him, he lifts his tattered hat, and his wretched lips mutter the well-worn sentence: 'Sir, have you a copper to spare?' In other words, 'The only relationship between you and me,' he says, 'is the penny you may give me for a dram, and I will forget that I am a hungry and homeless wretch.'"

The late Professor Perthes, of Bonn University, was the first to direct Charity towards her duty by these rovers. The first *Herberge zur Heimath* — "journeyman's home" we may call it—was set up at Bonn in

1854. Of these *Herbergen*, or "home inns," there are now about four hundred in Germany, with some fourteen thousand beds, and always well filled; so well, indeed, that it is only to meet the demand, if those interested in the movement plead for more of these homes. The journeymen artisans passing through them may be out of work, but they are not the habitual "out-of-work," they are not the ragged, not the demoralised unemployed. The *Herberge* is to keep the *Handwerks-bursch* from becoming a *Stromer;* it is for the respectable journeyman passing from one town to another in search of work. Such a one pays for his board as you would pay at an inn, but the charges are the lowest possible —ninepence to a shilling a day for bed and food, eighteenpence if a man have a room to himself.

The characteristic difference between the relief stations and these "homes" is this: the former are a development of parish relief, the latter an expression of brotherly love; the relief stations are merely secular, and based on a poor-tax which a given district has agreed to levy within its borders for the suppression of indiscriminate charity to street beggars (which in Germany includes the beggar's knocking at your own door), whereas the *Herberge* is established and kept going by a committee of home missions. The relief stations in certain respects may be compared to the casual wards in this country, while the *Herberge* has a look of the Young Men's Christian Association about it,—which, indeed, often is connected with these homes, these being of a strictly Christian character. The relief station is managed by an overseer, the *Herberge* by a *house-father*, a brother (deacon) provided by Nazareth and similar institutions.

The English traveller can scarcely move through any German town, even of moderate size, without coming upon a comfortable-looking, substantial house bearing the inscription over the lower row of windows, *Herberge zur Heimath*. Let him enter. He will find a spacious guest-chamber, set with tables and wooden benches, simple and solid, the red-chequered table-linen, and the geraniums or carnations in the window, lending warmth to the severe simplicity. Everything is tidy and clean. A few pictures on the wall, along with an ordnance map of the district showing the roads, and, more important still, lists giving the names of local employers in search of hands, complete the furniture. This apartment joins another, fitted as a reading-room. Here a man may write his letter, may rest and read; here also the house-father gathers any who will be gathered to morning and evening prayers. The house is open to any respectable artisan, no matter of what creed, or no creed; the house is a Christian house, meaning this at once in the narrowest and in the broadest sense; its doors stand wide, but no man entering is asked about his religion. He is received; the good influence of the place is ready to do its best by him; not urging this "best" on him, but making him feel, "it is good to be here." The truer our Christianity, the more widehearted its charity. The house-father is an evangelist, but an unobtrusive one, and the house is a Christian "public"-house. A man may order his glass of beer, but not more than his glass; spirits are forbidden, and getting drunk elsewhere means dismissal. The evenings are social; no card-playing, but other amusements, and story-telling and laughter; there is singing, and, of course, the inevitable pipe. A German

would not thank you for any religion precluding that: he will smoke himself into paradise or stay out—most of them, at least. But, if plenty of merriment, there is order and discipline. At 9.30 to 10 p.m. this "family" breaks up, and the house-father then invites them to prayers. If he has understood how to make the evening pleasant to them, gaining their confidence by entering into their joys and sorrows, their hopes and anxieties concerning earthly things, he will find it the easier to draw them after him into the room set apart, there to sing a hymn, have a Bible reading, and join in prayer. And if you take these men aright, you will find that most of them, far from "religious" though they may be, have signs of a hunger somewhere about them—that hunger, though all unconscious sometimes, which God alone can still. And when they go their way, the atmosphere of the house goes with them; they know the difference between a Christian *Herberge* and a public-house, and they seek the *Herberge* again when the next need comes round. What though to many it be the difference to their purse only and the helpfulness gained, is it nothing that about two hundred thousand working men pass through these homes yearly? Who knows how many, by their quiet influence, are saved from drink—saved too from Socialism,* and helped to lead steady lives? It is the first step in the upward growth. They may stop there, yet it *is* a step.

The *Herberge* homes, then, primarily are open doors for the respectable unemployed, the journeymen artisans passing through a town; but they are open also, where there is sufficient accommodation at least, to the young

* Socialism in Germany, for the most part, is social democracy.

men of the place, the working men in employment. There is a room set apart for these, a sort of Young Men's Christian Association room, with books and all that, well warmed and lighted, so that any young artisan—joiner, shoemaker, or tailor—his day's work done, may know where to go. It is his public-house *minus* his usual temptations. It is often the want of a cheerful home, of a welcome somewhere, which drives the young men in our cities into the places where their feet cannot stand. In the *Herberge* no religious expectation of any kind is put forward to these visitors; they may come of a Sunday, read their book, write their letter home; there is a kindly word from the house-father, and they feel welcome. By degrees they are likely to stay for the evening gathering, and hear a word that may stick.

At Bielefeld there is a beautiful *Herberge*, to which the relief station, with its wood-chopping premises, is joined —that is to say, they are under one roof and managed by the same house-father—the former a child of the local home-mission, the latter a provision of the town, the house-father being the uniting link. The religious influence is dealt out to all alike, the inmates of the *Herberge* and the vagabond strangers otherwise, of course, not being treated on a par. It is a large house, with splendid accommodation—with large public rooms, too, to gather in the working men round about; and they *are* gathered in! The very air of the house tells of "Social Christianity" combating Socialism.

All the *Herbergen* throughout Germany now form an association known as the *Deutsche Herbergs-Verein*, which has its headquarters at Bethel. How numerous are the threads running together in Pastor von

Bodelschwingh's little study! But it is the fourth of his coadjutors, Pastor Mörchen, who, as general secretary of the *Deutsche Herbergs-Verein*, has a hold of this special thread by which the labour-seeking artisans are being led. He is a man wide awake to every improvement on their behalf, and has the welfare of his "itinerant parishioners," as he calls them, warmly at heart.

This, then, is the triple alliance—the *Labour Colony*, the *Relief Station*, the *Herberge*—which is spreading its net quietly, but surely, over all Germany. As a united effort, it has been in working order a few years only, passing from growth to growth, from improvement to improvement; but it has gathered in the vagabonds, aiding the orderly among them, and making the disorderly, if they will tramp, at least tramp decently and in order. You hardly ever see the *Stromer* now; both his unkemptness and his desperation have disappeared from the highways. There is method in everything in the Fatherland; and the State has not been slow in recognising, even in working hand in hand with, these efforts of Christian charity. The State has stepped in to say more sternly, and justly too: "If a man is now found starving and ragged, begging and loafing, it must be his own fault, for there is the relief station and there is the colony"; any loafer, therefore, now has to answer for himself to policeman or *gendarme*, and the inveterate vagabond finds himself landed without much ado in the house of correction, there to consider his ways. The house of correction thus, to retain Pastor von Bodelschwingh's fable, is the bunch of hay in which the incorrigible flea eventually is drowned. Many of the "incorrigibles," of course, turning up their noses at

the work-providing Fatherland, have simply left the country, seeking their begging fortunes under more lenient skies. Constantinople and other Eastern haunts appear to be the present El Dorado of trampdom. We should not wonder, however, if a fair proportion of the "inveterates" were walking the streets of London at this moment, since Britain, too, is a harbour of refuge, asking no questions! Thus, in plain language, some of the "fleas" got rid of by Germany are no doubt feeding upon England now. Well, let England follow the example—let her start her own colonies in self-defence. We have shown how Germany has been rid of the pest.

Not that there is not much misery left in Germany, especially in the great cities. Germany is the home of Socialism; but Socialism, in one direction at least, is being taken in hand with a merciful grip. Thus much seems proved, that out-of-workdom can be grappled with; and if you set about it aright you will have something to show for your effort—enough certainly, greatly to encourage you to proceed. And the thing to note is, that all this is being done in Germany at a marked saving to the public purse, that is, the combined capital of the country. In the first place, indiscriminate charity is suppressed; in the second place, and on principles of political economy, it is cheaper to address yourself systematically to the whole lump of misery called social distress than to let each starving beggar go fishing for himself in its turbid waters, or to leave him to the spasmodic efforts of private benevolence. Now, no one would have believed this before Pastor von Bodelschwingh worked out his figures, and put it all on paper for folk to consider as a simple lesson in arithmetic,

showing that the rescue of the submerged is not only a duty of Christian charity, but also a bit of ciphering productive of actual gain. He did not go to the country saying, "We must come out handsomely with a hundred thousand pounds for these starving beggars." No; he said, "I will show you how to save them mercifully and kindly, and save our own purses to boot. Charity, of course, appeals to our purses, but it will cost us much less to do it thus and thus!" Now, folk are apt to be charmed with proposals for the public benefit which go upon lines of saving, of political economy that is—doing charity wisely and well.

Another point to note—and this brings us to actual results—is this: that not only have the vagabonds largely disappeared, but public crime also has diminished, some of the reports say by about 30 per cent.! Even the houses of correction, working, so to speak, hand in hand with the colonies, are less needed. There are about twenty of these about the country. In 1885 they counted twenty-three thousand inmates; in 1890 thirteen thousand. This is progress! this is saving! and in a double sense—men are saved from despair and consequent crime, and the public purse is saved, for crime is costly. No wonder, then, that Pastor von Bodelschwingh is believed in for his lessons in arithmetic. He always gets the money he wants, for people know it bears good interest. He is the son of a minister of finance, but he is something else. He is the simplest and most modest of Christians; and if you talk to him about these things and the secret of success, he will say, with a beautiful light in his eye, "Love is the great propeller; we only need enough of it, and to set to work humbly."

Charity, it will be seen, is thus fast becoming a science in Germany, if science means system and method and thoroughness. Mere sentiment is a weak prop to philanthropy: even pitiful action alone is; but combine method with both, and you have a system—you have a science.

CHAPTER XI

THE SPIRITUALLY EPILEPTIC

"Am I my brother's keeper?"

DRINK, of course, is the road by which many of the unemployed eventually find themselves in the labour colony. Either it was drink which in the first instance threw them out of work, or, being out of work, drink was their miserable solace; and the habitual drunkard, by the nature of him, continues unemployed.

They come to the colony to be aided, starving as they are, all other doors being closed to them save the house of correction; but one cannot really aid them without going to the root of their woes. How is it to be done? Walking about the colony for three or four months with the blue ribbon fastened to your coat, figuratively—for, of course, there is no drink there, save water and your cup of coffee twice a day—and though you work while there, or are made to work ever so diligently, this is no certain cure. What, then, is to be done?

Speaking of the colonies as a whole, it is perhaps too early for them to face the question to the full extent of action; but Wilhelmsdorf, their pattern from the first, has taken the lead in this also. Wilhelmsdorf found it had a very special mission to the unemployed drunkard. As we have abundantly seen, things are never directly planned in that domain of charity. They arise out of

the necessities of the work. It is only that an ever-watchful eye is present seeing the necessity, and an ever-ready hand finding a way. But the seeing and the finding in this instance also has its own story.

At *Kinderheim*, in Bethel, where the sick babes are nursed, there is a free bed, the legacy of a poor drunkard. Many beds are free at Kinderheim—indeed, the fifty are free, if need be; but this one is set apart, and the dying infants passing through it—a growing family they—will stand in glory one day, and will they not say to that drunkard, "We were forsaken orphans; we were consumptive, rickety, helpless little things, the children of drunkards; but thou didst take us in?"

That drunkard finished his earthly course in his twenty-seventh year. He had early fallen among thieves, and been a vagabond on the highway. The public-house and low lodging-house keepers, and the ill companions gathering at those places, did their work by him—the work through which so many, who but for their terrible surroundings would perhaps not fall so grievously, are ruined body and soul, and brought to an early grave. The Good Shepherd went seeking that youth. He was picked up one night in a quarry into which he had fallen, and with fractured ribs and broken limbs was taken to Sarepta. He was drunk when he met with his accident, and as he lay for three months, nursed by the sisters, he resolved to drink no more. But before the year was out another infirmary had the nursing of him for a similar reason. He had again been drinking, and got into a street brawl at night; had again a limb broken. He did think he could stand now, for twice he had been punished; but two years later, from a distant prison, a letter came to Pastor von

Bodelschwingh, written by the prison chaplain, saying they had a poor convict, fast dying of consumption, who was anxiously entreating for leave to die at Sarepta. It was that youth. Drink had brought him the criminal's reward, and now he lay dying. Sarepta, of course, had a bed for him.

Now, *what* brought him? He was not a Christian, but he knew he was dying. What brought him? He came to find peace at Bethel. A stranger's grave in the little cemetery there was given him, and they put these words for an inscription: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Before he died he bequeathed his humble patrimony for the purpose above named. Often enough in the beech wood behind Sarepta, where the invalids breathe the strengthening air, would he have seen the little cots carried out by the sisters. He had been left fatherless, and he pitied the orphan children of drunkards. He was just upon seven-and-twenty, and his little patrimony had not been touched, his mother having left it to be held in trust for him till he should have passed his twenty-eighth birthday, hoping, perhaps, that her prodigal by that time might be "coming home." And so he was. And this is how a vagabond, a convict, and a dying drunkard made his will.

His soul was saved, but for this life he paid the penalty; and those who stood by his dying bed learned from this that a few months of even the truest guardianship will not suffice to wean a drunkard from his temptation without fear of relapse. Such a one requires to be nursed body and soul, and time only, combined with wisest care, can hope to effect a cure. For that young man was not the only slave of intemperance who

has found his grave in the little sleeping-ground where epileptics rest from their affliction, the labour colony always numbering some dying ones, dying from drink, among her outcast flock; and, one by one, such were coming to the sick wards of Sarepta. Nor was this all; for many a one, though coming to die, like that first one of the number, yet came to find life. The sadness was rather for those who also might be said to be dying ones, who stayed awhile at the colony, and had to be dismissed because they would not submit to the wholesome restraints put upon them there. Drink is forbidden, but a man, if he so wills, cannot be kept from attempts to procure it; and dismissal is the only punishment for breaking the rules of the place. Such, of course, only leave to sink the deeper. They might be good labourers, they might have done well at the colony in this respect, even finding employment on leaving; but they are like him whose chamber was swept and garnished for a time, and whose last state is worse than the first. And even with those who stand well at the colony the danger of relapse is very great when the temptations of the unguarded life once more beset them.

Nevertheless, it is not wholly right to say: It is their own fault; we have tried to help them, we have done our best; the colony took them in, but they are irreclaimable. Truly they are sinning, but society also—*you* and *you*—has sinned against them. You met the poor unemployed in rags and tatters, you pitied his starving face, you listened to his tales of woe, you gave him your coppers and walked away. *You either should have done more for him or less,* says *"The Greatest Thing"!* The coppers alone may be his ruin. It is

largely through your ill-considered charity that man has become what he is! And with the tenth part of the money given in the streets of our great cities shelters and work-stations could be erected all over the country to take in the unemployed before they sink, making them work for their keep till regular employment is found. Prevention is not only better, it is also easier, than cure! And the cure need hardly ever be required if we all knew and did our duty towards preventing. Ask yourself, honest reader, are you quite sure you could withstand the temptation on a raw November day, in the streets—no work, no home, but pennies to be had for the asking? Then for God's and your poor brother's sake do not give your pennies any longer, but go and do some preventing, if only by joining pennies together in the right direction; they will make a stronger hand than yours for the upholding of your brother.

There is another class—the crippled or half-crippled beggars: surely we may pity them! They cannot do much work. They beg, they drink, they perish. Even the labour colony is not for such; for they would need to be there permanently, and thus would keep out others. Yet, is it right to let them perish? They are drunkards, they are unemployed: what is to be done with them?

It is for these among her flock—for the drunkards, hale or crippled—that Wilhelmsdorf went further afield, founding another little colony at a little distance, and naming it *Friedrichs-Hütte*. It is a labour colony also, for labour here also is the medicine prescribed; but it is for inebriates solely. Those who are admitted are supposed to stay at least one year—two or three if thought advisable; indeed, they pledge themselves

on entering this refuge not to leave it again of their own choice. It is expected that their friends, or the parish, should pay a yearly sum for their maintenance over and above their own wages, which, after the manner of Wilhelmsdorf, are never handed over to them in cash. They receive wages on the condition only that such are forfeited if a man breaks his abstinence pledge.

But whence the name *Friedrichs-Hütte*—"Frederick's Cot"? We have seen that the late Emperor, then Crown Prince of the Empire, was Protector of Wilhelmsdorf. On the occasion of his silver wedding in 1883 a collection of silver pieces—crowns and half-crowns and other coin, the gift of the country, had resulted in a handsome present in cash to their Imperial Highnesses; and they made the noblest use of it, furthering the scheme then started for rescuing the unemployed. This Home for Inebriates was opened in 1888, just after the royal sufferer had laid down his earthly crown. It will be remembered from an earlier chapter that in their youth he and Pastor von Bodelschwingh had been playfellows; what more natural than that the Prince in after years followed with warmest sympathy the pastor's endeavours, and what more natural than that the pastor in his latest effort should commemorate the Prince's name? *Friedrich* in German means *rich in peace;* and at *Friedrichs-Hütte* the poor drunkards, perhaps for the first time in their lives, may gain a perception of peace—"liberty to the captive, the opening of the prison to them that are bound."

It is such a peaceful spot, a farmhouse to which another building has been added, shaded by sparsely

planted trees, through which you have a beautiful view over the spreading fields of the Senne to the blue hills beyond. It was a lovely summer evening when we stood there, the golden sunbeams slanting in and steeping the place in a flood of amber. The "patients" had returned from work, and were sauntering about or sitting in groups here and there; some were foddering the cattle. They are doing real hard work during the day, field labour mostly; we had watched them making trenches and digging up the sub-soil. There is a garden, too, well kept by them. Some few are occupied indoors—the endeavour ever being to employ a man according to his fitness. For instance, there was one who had been a cigar manufacturer, a spare little man, whose limbs ached all over on the fields. He implored those in authority to let him go back to his own trade. Well, and he did go back: these patients are permitted smoking, and they may as well smoke home produce. Friedrichs-Hütte has some thirty to forty inmates, and a Wilhelms-Hütte, a second refuge, is already springing up, a couple of miles distant. If an "Own Home" colony, such as the one spoken of on a former page, is the extension of the whole scheme at the upper end, colonies like Friedrich's and Wilhelm's-Hütte are the much-needed provision at the lower; in the former, men really "worth saving" can be stablished in the worthier life they are trying for; in the latter, those who have sunk too low for strength of will of their own, can at least be controlled and kept from their great temptation, if so be that the educating hand in the end, after all, may set them free.

Many of these patients are of respectable antecedents —a son of a clergyman, a son of an officer high in the

army, a man of good family who had been a wine-grower in Portugal, another whose father is Pasha Somebody in the Sultan's service, are among the number. All these have arrived in the labour colony "submerged" through drink. Sometimes also a good-for-nothing youngster is sent there by parents in despair of managing him. There was such a youthful prodigal newly arrived, and turning up his nose superbly at the idea of work. He looked sadly helpless, poor boy, in rather a fine, if dilapidated suit of clothes, having but just come to the place, a pickaxe was lying on one side, a copy of Molière on the other side of him, as he stood in one of the trenches,—"As if *I* could do such work," he said. "You will soon do it," the Pasha's offspring said consolingly—"it's the one thing here"; and he certainly set him a good example. There is a house-father of thorough peasant stock, who looks after all their needs—their spiritual needs too—and the pastor (the Senne has its own chaplain set over his flock by Bodelschwingh) is in personal touch with each of them. After a year or more, a trial is given these patients at Bethel itself—and how Bethel employs these rescued sheep the next chapter will tell.

The Crown Prince one day inspected this sandy waste, fast turning into a garden—salvation colonies truly, and bearing the royal names. At 5.30 one summer morning he arrived at Bielefeld, coming straight from Potsdam, and drove out to the Senne. At a village halfway two thousand school children, gathered from all the neighbourhood, stood awaiting His Imperial Highness. He graciously reviewed the youthful parade, and listened to their singing. For weeks these children had prepared for the Crown Prince, and as his

eagle eye scanned the bright-faced rows, he spied a little girl, poorly clad, and with a nosegay of wild-flowers. The little maiden kept in the background, for she was barefoot: but he went up to her with his most winning smile: "I know those pretty flowers have been gathered for me," he said; he took them at the hands of the blushing child, stroking her upturned face, and she, the poorest of them all—she who was last, was first.

As you go about the Senne—a walk around, in truth, is quite a transformation scene—passing through a growing plantation, the work of Wilhelmsdorf, you suddenly come upon what appears a castle in the wood. You have entered a little oak forest of fine old trees; it is the one spot in the neighbourhood where there is a break in that ferruginous stratum, an oasis of good soil, of fertile growth therefore in the sandy waste. So oak-trees grew and spread their branches. They spread them all around a little glade, and here your castle rises—a sylvan retreat of perfect charm; you fall in love with it at first sight. It is the *Eichhof*—Oak Court.

If you look about, you soon discover this too was originally a farmhouse, one of the regular Westphalian peasant glories, for the very entrance hall is but the former threshing-floor swept and garnished. The hand which transformed this place into what it now is, was gifted with the touch of art; the rooms—drawing-room, dining-room, the little bedrooms, each with a look-out into the deep green—having an old-world style about them which is perfectly enchanting: quaint furniture, high wainscoting, windows lozenge-paned and

set deep in the mullions; you fancy yourself in some mediæval forest haunt; you picture some high-born dame ruling her thrifty maidens and providing the home comforts for the absent men. You cannot help weaving garlands about this homestead swept by the broad breath of nature; you would fain build tabernacles here, stay here for ever, and let the world roll on without you. Goodness and purity seem to have stood sponsors to this Oak Court.

Yet what is it we have come out to see? It calls itself, with innocent euphemism, "*Pension* for gentlemen in search of temporary quiet." It is a refuge for prodigals of high degree. You stop a couple of days at the *Eichhof*, and as you join the family circle—at meals, for instance—you feel sure they are perfect gentlemen; so they are, of outward graces, in breeding and in manners, and not, it seems, unhappy in their voluntary or involuntary retreat. They, too, have come the road of transgressors—at least the road of selfish enjoyment, where a man's will is his paradise, doing as he pleases, working his own ruin and that of others. Not all were drunkards—a proportion of them were—there is other intemperance; there is gambling, there are the fashionable vices which the world condones. Happy they for whom such a place is waiting to take them in when they have come to the dregs.

The *pensionnaires*, so far from being of the submerged, are of the upper ten—counts and barons and all that—who when nothing was left but to cut their own throats, were glad to seize the hand good Pastor von Bodelschwingh was holding out to them. They have mostly been in the army till even the army could no longer keep them. They are of all ages between

five-and-twenty and forty or so. They are *pensionnaires*—that is, they are kept in every way like gentlemen ; they, or their friends for them, pay their £80 or £100 a year, but *they must work*. There is a large kitchen garden, and these high-born gardeners *do their regular eight hours a day*. There is a tale that they once complained to the Pastor,—they pay well, why should they work as well. Said he, "You pay not for your keep only, you pay for the luxury of work provided for you : you never knew that luxury before, and it is so good for you!" And they own it is good, the health of the place enveloping them.

The wonder is not so much that they come, but that they stay. There must be invisible cords, and strong ones, which hold them! We happened to witness the first meeting between Pastor von Bodelschwingh and the latest comer—a young *Freiherr* of about eight-and-twenty, a handsome good-natured sort of fellow, with not the faintest look of debauchery about him ; he had run through his fortune, and here he was. He had come into Bethel on the Jubilee day with two or three others. Said the pastor to him, "And who are you, *mein Lieber?*" The baron's name was given in due form and with a bow. But the pastor drew him close, putting his arm about him, and repeating his "*mein Lieber*" as only Bodelschwingh can. "Let love be among you," he said, "and peace abide." He had laid the young man's cheek against his own, who blushed violently. English folk despise men kissing, deeming it unmanly ; but this was the kiss we read of in Luke xv. 20. And if there were any salvation for that young man, it was coming to him even with a father's kiss—it was strong Love putting out her hand saying, "I am thy keeper." A few days after,

this same young baron was watching his first attempts in the Eichhof garden—he had sown a row of lobelias, and was very anxious they should be no discredit to him. There was promise here: if you are faithful over your lobelias, there is hope you will be faithful presently over greater things. A man need not be hopelessly bad for being at the Eichhof: it is a young man's upbringing often, the want of a firm hand in time, which lets him slip and fall. The Eichhof, then, is a blessed place for such.

The rules of the house are strict. No one, having given himself in charge there, may leave the precincts of this oasis without permission, and if he gets leave to go to town (Bielefeld—some seven miles distant), he is under pledge not to enter any place of refreshment save the "hospice" at Bethel. They do not seem to suffer from dulness at the Eichhof: their eight hours done, they have their smoking-room to enjoy a cigarette after meals, or a game of chess, or other amusement. They do not exactly work the flesh off their bones, yet a fair amount of labour is got through. Meadows have been put under irrigation, and the natural oak wood has been turned into a park by these high-born workmen; they have made paths intersecting the wood; they have put up a pleasant "Rest and be thankful" here, a rustic arbour there; they have made ponds and stocked them with gold-fish. And as you wander through that lovely greenery you once more are enchanted with the charms of the place; it is a fairy haunt; you almost look for the Sleeping Beauty, for a Prince to wake her—the sleeping soul of these men. And there is an awaking in some cases, a breaking through the thorny hedge, an opening of the prison to them that are bound. Fruit is ever

slow in growth, but fruit there is in some cases at least. And if most of these men go back to the world and you know not for what good they have been with you, yet surely a blessing goes with them—a memory, a haunting sense of a goodness they have seen. Who shall say it is in vain? They take away a seed with them, and who shall say it will not grow after many days?

Will the reader stop and consider the wonderful goodness which planned this home? Homes of charity for the poor we are used to, but here is a home—a charity in truest sense—for the nobly born "poor," poor because they have not the riches of grace to stand before the temptations of the world. And how beautifully it is done, just meeting their need, their weakness! There is nothing of the charity institution about it. But wisdom knows these men arrive at a point when they look about them despairingly, like a drowning man for a plank. This is the moment to say to them, "Come here—rest here—be here a while at peace!" They are physically down, meet them on that level; take them, Rousseau-fashion, back to Nature, to the kitchen garden, to the oak wood; and then, Christ-fashion, draw them close as Bodelschwingh did; for even your man of the world, your prodigal of manner thrice-guarded, has a hole in the armour for simple love to creep in. It is by love only, love taking us at our level, that any of us ever are saved.

The Eichhof is an ideal, a "working model" in itself. There are hundreds of young men like that Freiherr, fashionable, good-natured, not just *very* wicked, but nowise "good," scions of noble families, with no particular object in life—hundreds of them everywhere. Who is

holding out a hand to such in *this* country? Who says to those who are fast slipping down the incline, You are aweary, come and rest here? Who provides a resting-place for such in pleasant England, with her secluded parks, her highland wilds—a place so original in its planning, that men would come for the very novelty of the thing, come to taste the luxury of work so ingeniously rendered inviting, with companions of their kind? a place of which they would say, despite themselves, It is good for us to be here, and thus stay? For at the Eichhof a man is quite free to come and go—this is the marvel.

Perhaps there is something in this feeling of being among their *kind*—their "kind" not only in the "upper-ten" sense. They have all known the husks. But the chaplain resident in the house gives his testimony, that good breeding comes out strongly; a man's previous history though known, in part at least, to those who admit him to that refuge, is never subject of talk among themselves; they readily fall in with the tone of the house, which is that of cultured company. A man is apt to feel as he is treated, and the wisdom of rescuing love shows most in little things. These men are treated as gentlemen. Nor are accomplishments forgotten; if a man has a leaning towards literature he may follow his bent—there are books, there is music; so dulness is not a feature of the place.

The resident chaplain is pastor of all the Senne flock; before God, and in that humble place of worship, there is no difference. There "all have sinned and come short." There is a little chapel newly built for the out-of-work, for the prodigals of high and low degree, for the convalescent epileptics of Rehoboth, also, to meet

together on a Sunday. There is one point for the eye to rest on in this chapel, a picture—"The Prodigal's Return"—at least *a* Prodigal's return—for the picture represents Christ Himself receiving the returning one, and the thought embodied in that picture is rest, is peace. It is an illustration of—

> "Lay down, thou weary one, lay down
> Thy head upon My breast."

The original is the work of an artist of no mean skill for putting truth upon canvas; the copy in the chapel has been made by a lady, who, herself tasting a season of unrest, thought there could be no better use for it than to give it a place in that chapel, through which hundreds of prodigals ever are passing, some of them returning, some of them on their way home.

There is a collection of autobiographical sketches written by men who have gone through Wilhelmsdorf—men who came there lost and undone, and who, through the labour colony, found the upward way; it was especially during the earlier years of the colony that Pastor von Bodelschwingh encouraged the inmates, those who could, to write down their life-history, showing the road by which they had come. Some of these accounts are simply heart-rending, all are touching, leaving a feeling with the reader, "Who art thou, that God has kept thee from this? Who art thou, to cast a stone at thy brothers?" These manuscripts, of course, are not for the public eye. No two of them are alike—they are such different ways by which these men had sunk to the level of the unemployed, the vagabond, the starving outcast. But one keynote runs through

them all—now more veiled, now frankly confessing—this is the one cry, "I have sinned!" If a few only could add, "I will arise and go to my Father," yet the depth through which they had passed had brought them to say, "I have sinned!" and if truly so, this depth already is a rising. It is so easy to look at an unfortunate man with the Pharisee's "Thank God, I am not like him!" We may not be like these Senne folk, never doing a thing men can blame us for; yet some of these outcasts of society, prodigals though they were, may one day be first when some of us are last. There is nothing more soul-destroying than mere respectability. It will be true of Wilhelmsdorf, as it must be true of any collection of men, that many are called and few chosen. Maybe that but few who pass through its blessings of seclusion, its saving influences, will really be saved—saved with their soul's salvation in the end. But of some it may be said—it can be seen in these biographies, and House-father Meyer bears witness, having their grateful letters—that they take with them one of the greatest blessings to be won in the valley of humiliation, the meek and chastened spirit, the Prodigal's crown.

A drive through the Senne on a summer evening leaves with you one feeling only—*beauty for ashes!* How wretched were their lives: they had sinned, they had strayed, they were unsuccessful, and ashes only were left. Nothing left to make life worth having, not even work. They came here. The Senne itself is rising out of nature's ashes, being fast clothed in the fair garments of beauty honestly won. The hand of industry guided by brotherly love has done it. The ripening fields, the verdant meadows, the hills and the

brooks, the plantations and the heather of the yet unclaimed wastes, the little church rising in the midst—what a picture of peace! And as the sun goes down, and the purple shadows creep over the hills, you know, for you have seen it that day, that the gospel of Christ is not for them that never knew hunger; it is for the suffering, the sinning, for them that are bound, opening their prison and proclaiming to them the acceptable year of the Lord. A man must have known something of ashes to be ready for Christ's beauty, and the true oil of joy is for the mourners first of all. Do we not know that Christ never had many messages for the rich, the well-behaved orderly folk of society; but that His tenderness was for the poor, the sinning, the outcast—the "submerged," in fact, of those days! Why is this? Is it because each of us is a brother's, a sister's keeper, but we keep them not? we know their temptations, yet we do not even outwardly "keep" them—helping them to purer surroundings; we have our two coats, our abundance of the easier life, and we say we are thankful we have! Is it because we have so little to spare for these brothers, not even the steadying hand—that therefore Christ, the merciful, has to make up to these poor ones for our coldness? and He *does!* Jesus of Nazareth, first of all, is the friend of the poor! Pastor von Bodelschwingh says there is not more distress in the world than is good for us—for *us* who are not distressed—that there is only just enough to keep love going. For every hungry one there is another who has enough and to spare, for every one in tatters there is one with two coats—is not Christ's meaning obvious? Thus even squalid poverty becomes transfigured: it is Christ's training ground not only for the poor, but for the

not-poor to learn a great lesson! *Am I my brother's keeper?*

What if there were not more distress in England, not more drunkenness born of ill-housed poverty, not more unemployed, ill-fed misery, *than is good* to bring wealthy England to Christ? Why should there not be a Senne in this country also?

CHAPTER XII

THE CAVE OF ADULLAM

"And every one in distress, and every one in debt, and every one discontented, gathered themselves unto him, and he became a captain over them."

THIS is literally true! Pastor von Bodelschwingh has a way of his own of proclaiming liberty to the captives, of opening the prison of them that are bound. He trusts a man; even if a man has been to prison, he finds ways and means of trusting him yet. He *saves* him by trusting him! *And it pays!*

One of the wonderful things about Bethel is the art it has developed of "making room." It is a favourite expression there "*Enlarge the tent!*" and with singular ease they pull out the pegs of even the fully-stretched tent, enlarging it yet again. It is so elastic, this tent of theirs—so adaptable, too! It has gathered the poor and the maimed and the blind, and yet there is room.

Has a man lost his footing in the world, from whatever cause? is he in trouble? is he in despair of any kind —honest despair that would be helped? let him go to Bethel. A hand is sure to be wanted about the offices that very day: most fortunate you have come; these books want revising; that clerk is overburdened; some important copying work has got to be done; just stay and help us! And the man stays; and *he feels wanted*

—one of the finest moral pulleys in this world of sinking folk. He picks up courage directly, he picks up self-respect, he looks an inch taller before the week is out. A noble pride has risen to repay such trust. The observant eye marvels at this unwritten page of Bethel's history. Even here we must not do more than just touch upon it. One is at a loss what more to admire, the trust given or the trust repaid. For it answers—in a wonderful way it answers; it stands proved and tried.

A great staff of subalterns, of course, is required about such a colony—men outside the actual circle of labour of love, men who work for a living: clerks, bookkeepers, cashiers, secretaries, copyists—nearly all these at Bethel are shipwrecked mariners; and Bethel not only is the lifeboat to carry them ashore, it also is the *terra firma* on which they eventually may stand. Or, more properly speaking, in many an instance Bethel is lifeboat and nothing more—taking a man in for a time and piloting him back to the world whence he has slipped; but in many another instance the shipwrecked stranger remains and develops into a useful worker. He was helped—he stays to help.

This has come about quite naturally, as things are apt to come about at Bethel. Among the "submerged" passing through Wilhelmsdorf, among the victims of intemperance finding refuge at Friedrichs-Hütte, there are many concerning whom true charity says, "Give that man another chance." They are of the educated classes. They have had a fall. Their friends have disowned them; or, if friends would condone, they cannot easily find the employment they are fit for. They stand discredited. Yet the man may be worth

saving, worth trusting. We might have fallen, in his environment. We are our brother's keeper, says Bodelschwingh ; we must put out the hand of love to steady him, and he may stand.

There is a curious house at Bethel, called "Ephratah." You may spend weeks about the place and take no notice whatever of this house ; it is not talked about. If you do take note of it, you are told a retired missionary required a post of usefulness, and he found it in that house, there being an ever increasing number of clerks and others employed at Bethel, and it is kind to gather them into a family. This missionary is their house-father. He is answerable for some five-and-twenty of these mariners. They do not now look shipwrecked, but they still need piloting, and they know they do.

A typical case : The son of respectable parents was articled as a clerk, and got an appointment in Berlin. He had a good salary ; but, after the ways of young men in the great capital, the day's earnings barely sufficed for the evening's dissipation. He got into difficulties. A friend advising him "change of air," to go and see something of the world, he came to London ; but his Berlin experiences had ill fitted him for the greater struggle in the English metropolis. He fell a prey, all too easily, to companions worse than himself ; and, waking one morning to the fact that he was hopelessly ruined, he procured a revolver, and that night in Hyde Park attempted his life. He was picked up insensible by a fellow-countryman, who took him to a hospital, and who, when the hospital discharged him, paid for his ticket back to the Fatherland. He arrived on German soil, but only to begin the

vagabond's life; for who now would employ him—trust him? Tramping the country hopeless and penniless, yet with a spark of promise somewhere in his soul, he one day heard of the labour colony, Wilhelmsdorf, and "I will arise" quivered through him, fanning that spark to a flame. He arose and went.

But men at the labour colony are not all treated alike. The helpful hand held out there to each and all alike is ruled by singular judgment; it discriminates; it watches a man; it says, "This man, though he has fallen among thieves, is yet not altogether a thief," and it singles him out for different treatment. That man is now at Ephratah, has been there for eighteen months. He is in one of the offices, a useful hand in the bookkeeping department, filling his post faithfully and endeavouring to work his way back to the level whence he has fallen. When he shall have served his two years, Bethel will stand surety for him to any situation he may apply for; the past will be forgotten, and he may once more begin his way in life with an experience which perhaps with all its humiliating recollections is none too dearly bought. Is he a "Christian"? He at any rate has learned two things—to distrust himself, and to be faithful. For the present he is never missed from his place in Zion Church.

Church-going is not exactly compulsory for these gathered-in sheep; they know, however, that it is expected of them. But some have been through all the teachings of Socialism, and their ideas about religion are much awry. Some years ago a little band of them *would* absent themselves. They were not driven, but they were watched; possibly they were all the more earnestly

prayed for. One Saturday evening, in the gloaming, one of them, as spokesman for the rest, appeared in the pastor's study—it was one of Bodelschwingh's coadjutors—as he was preparing his sermon, and with much confusion confessed his utter inability to believe this and that the Church would have him believe, and "his companions were of one mind with him." They did not wish to be humbugs—they did not "feel good." But they were willing to come to the pastor of an evening once or twice a week. Would he try to explain things to them? Only they would rather not let it be known. The pastor willingly agreed to this Nicodemus request, and the secret disciples, who could not believe, and who would not be "humbugs," but who did ask to be taught, had a little service all to themselves, as they had begged for. The results are with Him who weighs men in His balance, and who judges them with a judgment all His own.

Most of these men are a credit to the trust placed in them. Some continue black sheep—black in heart, though outwardly submitting to restraint; but for most it can be said that Wilhelmsdorf, and after that Ephratah, has been the turning-point.

For all the restraint put upon them—they may not leave the precincts of the colony without the house-father's permission, and they have signed an agreement that if they visit any public-house or other place of low company they forfeit every right to return to their haven of refuge—for all their past history, which is more or less minutely known, they are not treated as men lost to honour. On the contrary, they are put on their honour, and it generally answers. They are among the officials of the place. They are paid for their work at

the rate of sixpence to ninepence a day, besides their full keep. This money is not given them—at least, not at first. The house-father keeps it for them, and by degrees only, beginning with small sums, they are entrusted with money. They know they are under treatment for the breaking of fetters which bound them, under treatment to give them strength for weakness ; and, like a sick man, they submit to a physician wiser than themselves. Two years is considered a full course of treatment, and after that they are helped back into situations corresponding to their capacities. On the whole, they are a credit to the treatment undergone ; and their grateful letters show they have learned a lesson.

Ephratah is the first stage. Some get beyond its leading-strings, taking up their life for good at the place which has saved them. These are on the regular staff of officials. Indeed, there is hardly a man employed in the offices who has not come to Bethel with a more or less troubled history ; yet not every shipwrecked man has been wrecked criminally.

The great Rothschild, it is said, once was asked concerning the secret of his success. "I never employ a man who has been unfortunate." Well, it depends upon what is meant by success ; but Pastor von Bodelschwingh, though by preference he employs "unfortunates," does so with singular success. He has surrounded himself with a staff of workers who have all come to him out of troubled waters, and who are now "his friends." He always addresses them as "*Lieber Freund*," his spiritual co-workers, of course, being "*Lieber Bruder*." It is something to be called friend by such a man, and these men have earned it.

It is with reluctance one singles out a few of the most

remarkable cases: one feels it a breach of confidence almost, a treading on sacred ground; yet this is written for English readers, as a working model, as a bright example; and if a German eye, even if the eye of those concerned, should meet this, they will know it is to the glory of true charity, it is to the honour of the Pastor who has been the good Samaritan—yea, a friend to them, it is to their own honour and encouragement these lines are written.

Pace any man of Rothschild's way of thinking, will the English reader deem it very strange that two of the staff, in places of exceptional responsibility, who have thousands passing through their hands, are men who once barely escaped the arm of the law for dishonourable bankruptcy? They have been for a number of years in their present position of trust, and fill it honourably. They have had a house of their own given them. Bodelschwingh has a great idea of people having houses of their own, he is always making homes and building houses. One of the confidential clerks actually is an ex-convict. He had appropriated trust money, not with evil intent, but meaning to replace it. He served his term. He then came to Bodelschwingh, was put on trial, and found worthy of trust. He has been for some years now at Bethel, and is doing well.

There are quite a number of such men who have come to Bethel, utterly discredited by their darkened past, who have been tried and trusted, and who have stood the test. These things are barely known at the colony; they are known only to those who needs must know, and are not talked about. There is a beautiful freemasonry of trust and of humility, which says, "We all have sinned, and come short of the glory." You go

about Bethel trying, perhaps, to read the inner history; you may want to know as much as possible about things there, desirous perchance of telling the story, as a working model, as a bright and shining example. You talk to one of the staff-workers; he has given you much valuable information; you find him especially interested in the labour colony and kindred institutions for saving the submerged—in fact, he is doing much useful work on their behalf; you express your admiration to him of much you have seen and heard, and you actually tell him something like this: That one of the loveliest things about this colony of mercy *is* this rescue work among its very officials, this putting of ex-convicts even into positions of trust. Like a thoughtless innocent, you have rushed in where angels would fear to tread. You are aware of it suddenly, noticing a slight blush overspreading the man's features. He is a man of middle age and of most sober appearance; but here he is blushing, and you feel your own cheeks mantling at the sudden revelation. Well, he too is an "unfortunate"; a faithful worker now for the very men who might all end their days in prison but for the helping hands stretched out to them. All honour to that man!

Pastor von Bodelschwingh's own private secretary, his right hand, and trusted with all his correspondence, with much private knowledge too, is a young man saved from "prison" also; not in this instance the prison of stone and mortar, but a worse prison, an unprincipled relation of his, a doctor, having taught him the abuse of morphia. He was a slave to it, his prospects in life were ruined when he landed at Wilhelmsdorf; but his fetters have been broken. He is one of the most capable and faithful men now about Bethel. He won the affections

of a Bielefeld girl last winter, and Bodelschwingh himself went surety for him to the girl's parents.

Is this prudent of the Pastor? Let the question be answered by an example to hand. They tell you at Wilhelmsdorf how one of their flock, who had done well at the labour colony, found his way back to the world of blameless living. He was a gentleman, and a man need not be a reprobate for having been to Wilhelmsdorf. He was fortunate in getting a good situation, and for a while nothing but good was heard of him. He was making friends, and presently he too was engaged to a young lady—her people knowing nothing of his unfortunate antecedents. One day, out walking with the girl and her parents, an ordinary workman accosted him with an offhand, "How d'ye do, Charley?—got back to the top I see!" A natural enquiry followed. How did he come to be chum with a mere working man? "I knew him at Wilhelmsdorf," was the simple confession. That was enough for these respectable people: the match was broken off—little blame to them perhaps, and yet! The poor fellow in utter despair left the neighbourhood which now looked askance at him, and a despairing man is not likely to be fortunate; he took to drink, and the second stage of that man was worse than the first; yet this second stage need never have been! It is the difference between Rothschild's wisdom and Bodelschwingh's charity: the former may drive a man back to the mire, the latter may be his staff to uphold him. It is by *being believed in* that a man often is saved!

Several of these rescued ones thus are settled at Bethel, having their own fireside. It is beautiful, this setting up of houses, clusters of home-life about the

colony. Says one: "But this is an expensive way of doing it! Secretaries can be had by the score at secretaries' pay, and here you pay a man and give him a house besides, with something very like a tacit promise even, to have a care for his family." Well, there are two ways of looking at this, and Bodelschwingh may be quite sure that his way is winning him helpers who will go through fire and water for him. This is worth paying for · there is something in faithful service coming from the heart of gratitude. But Bodelschwingh never considers money when he has men to consider. "I care not one jot what it costs," you may hear him say; "I care about the human beings in question."

Is not this a Christ-like way of doing things? Christ's companion who went with him into Paradise had been a thief! Some of Bodelschwingh's "companions" in his great work of mercy, his staff of helpers, and now his "friends," have, some of them, been thieves, some of them convicts, all of them men who were "unfortunate," men whom the successful Rothschild would not have employed. It might not answer with a great banker; it does answer at Bethel, it answers admirably, even as a matter of worldly wisdom! For although Bodelschwingh might sometimes get a secretary, a cashier, "cheaper" than he does, he yet gets much extra work done by means of this general rescue agency. It is charity repaid.

There are other "unfortunates" gathering about this captain. The first evening we spent with Pastor Stürmer we found him reading a letter just received. It was from a prison chaplain, telling a strange story of a girl in trouble. A fortnight later that girl quietly arrived at Bethel, and was placed as "help" in one of the

houses, no one asking where she had come from, no one being told. It is one of the silent streams of healing flowing at Bethel that such girls are taken in. No one knows what has become of them, save a friend or two; they have disappeared from their former surroundings, and Bethel is their home for a while. "You would scarcely think it," said Pastor Stürmer, "but we have girls here at times, quiet and helpful, coming to us from the strangest antecedents. Where should they go?" Such are not always best placed in a penitentiary, for the stain of that would cling to them. Bethel is not a penitentiary, yet it is a haven of refuge, a bridge to many, leading to a better, purer future. One may well ask what form of human trouble is *not* taken in at Bethel? But then the great text of Bethel is, "*to comfort all that mourn*"—*all!* Is a man, is a woman in trouble? have they appealed to us? that suffices—we can but try and comfort them. Yes, it is Christ-like.

Even minor troubles find a hearing there. At the epileptic carpenters', below the general workshop in the engine room, there is a noisy steam-saw,—surely an epileptic patient is not entrusted with it? "Oh no, and you see it *is* so noisy, quite a trial to ordinary mortals; but we have picked up a deaf-and-dumb artisan, he manages this part of the engine room."* Several

* This machinery, primarily for joinery purposes, is utilised also for the production of electric light. This little world in many ways is quite up to date. The pastor's study, for instance, is connected by telephone not only with the more important Homes about Bethel, but with the labour colony at Wilhelmsdorf (and with the Eichhof) seven miles distant; the telephone connecting the colony also with the telephone and telegraph of Bielefeld. As a matter of fact, therefore, Bethel is in speaking connection with all the civilised world.

deaf-and-dumb, in fact, are employed about Bethel. Of two men applying for a post at the colony, both equally fitted for the work they would do, and equally trustworthy, he who can plead he is in trouble is sure to have the preference. They have an office boy with a painfully disfigured face; he was born with this affliction, and though otherwise hale and capable no one would employ him. He found his niche at Bethel; he is but a youth, he may live to prove a grateful worker.

It is curious also how many pastors you meet at Bethel; you come upon them at every turn,—men overworked, men broken down, men maybe in spiritual trouble, who formerly would have fled to the cloister; they gather to this captain, to the wholesome Christian life of this colony,—this, too, is Cave of Adullam. They throw themselves into the work, and presently they return to the harvest-fields of the world taking a new life with them. Let any man, let any woman, go to Bethel who, for whatever reason, may feel worsted in the battle to be fought; no one will set up to teach them, but they will learn a lesson there—they will be shown how to buckle on the armour afresh, and be different men, different women, thereafter.

It has happened sometimes that the good comfort dealt out so freely at Bethel is wasted on a man unworthy; there are those on whom salvation's trust is lost. It does happen occasionally that a man runs away with a few hundred marks—there have been no more serious defalcations — but this leaves Bodelschwingh quite unconcerned. "The money is nothing," he says, "when we are trying for men," and he will just go on with his trust policy. He has one painful recollection.

A nobly born "unfortunate" once presented himself in his study, imploring to be saved. Well, what could he put his hand to? Nothing much; he had frittered away his youth; he knew about postage stamps—the mania for stamp-collecting then being at its height. Well, then, he should start a stamp collection. It would occupy him, if it did not pay. But things are always done with a will at Bethel,—that is, thoroughly. The colony is in communication with missionaries and consuls all the world over, and before long everybody was sending used postage stamps—it was the beginning of a *Postage Stamp Bazaar*, which now requires a house of its own, occupying a score of patients.

But this unfortunate nobleman did not prove himself trustworthy. With rare patience the Pastor tried for that man's soul, and tried again, he all the while cheating his benefactor and selling the more valuable stamps for his own purposes, going his own evil ways eventually and dying in prison. He had been for a couple of years at Bethel, an amiable good-for-nothing. They knew it, and yet they tried. He lived at their expense, but his soul was worth more to the pastor than the money wasted on him and by him. Nevertheless, Bethel has not in the end been out of pocket by even this act of charity. That stamp bazaar, which had so curious a beginning, grew to be a paying concern on a firm business footing. And the solicitude bestowed on this stray sheep, though wasted on him, was yet not wasted, but rather bore fruit in showing a way for the gathering in of other sheep; the house "Ephratah," spoken of at the beginning of this chapter, has developed out of this first endeavour. Bodelschwingh sees a man much needing to be rescued,—he tries, he fails; but he

remembers there are others like him, and this is how a work begins.

One day a man, overcome with admiration at this wealth of Christian charity, this power of comforting all that mourn, came to Bodelschwingh. "I just want to see your face," he said. "Nay," said the pastor, "there is One Face to look into, even that of the Man of Sorrows, and you will not be able then to let any sorrow pass your door unhelped."

CHAPTER XIII

WORKMAN'S HOME

"Beauty for Ashes."

THOSE only who never had a home of their own can appreciate the full force, even the kindness of our Lord's promise to His troubled disciples—"*In My Father's house are many mansions—I go to prepare a place for you.*" They were about to be homeless; for home does not mean chairs and tables, it does not mean hearth-room only, it means heart-room, and He was the friend to whom their love had gathered even in an earthly sense. "Many mansions" is not the happiest rendering, for we are not to understand heaven to be all palaces: there will be degrees even there; if palaces, no doubt then cottages also, whatever they be, with this difference only, that one and all quite equally will be dwelling-places of content, for the former things, the sorrow, the pain, the strugglings and longings, will have passed away. "In My Father's house are many dwelling-places, I go to prepare *your* place, and *yours*, and *yours*"—an abiding-place for each homeless, home-coming wanderer—this rather is the meaning, taking into account each personal need to be met there in His own way. Human friends often are very dense, but the One Friend understands, and at this solemn time of His going to the death for them,

Sin-bearer for them all, He did not say, I go to mediate for you at the right hand of Glory; no, He left them with the far simpler promise of *dwelling-places*, a place *for them*. "Heaven will be the warmer to those who had but little covering here," says David Elginbrod; and Christ's promises are fullest of meaning to those who have not—to them that hunger. How can they who have "many mansions" here long with an equal longing for Christ's mansions with those who have not? Yes, they can, by His first cutting the strings which tie them to the "mansions" below—often a painful process. And even a poor man may be tied to his wheelbarrow. But to these others, His homeless ones, to them is the promise. "I had not where to lay My head," He says; "I know your want."

But there is a state of homelessness in modern life which should not be—homes which are no homes, human dwelling-places in which it is next to impossible for a man to grow fit for heaven; in which want of cleanliness is the soil for impurity, where men and women grow drunkards in despair. A German judge the other day summed up his experience in the curious sentence: "Social crimes are in exact proportion to the surface of friction in our dwellings"—in plain English: want of elbow-room is the mother of half our wickedness. It is concerning this want of elbow-room among the working-classes we now have a word to say, for Bethel, that large-hearted comforter, has set herself to combat this also, seeking redress for this glaring want.

Bielefeld, in the outskirts of which our colony is situated, a manufacturing place of some importance, enjoys the reputation of being an advance-guard of

Socialism; there are large sewing-machine works in that city, and linen manufactories employing their thousands of hands. The year 1885 brought troubled times to Bielefeld, culminating in a general strike, quiet being eventually restored by military interference. Peaceful Bethel was involved in an unexpected way.

Some travelling locksmiths and other iron-workers happened to be at the *Herberge* when the strike broke out, and this gave rise to the altogether unfounded assertion that Wilhelmsdorf was coming to the rescue of the forsaken manufacturers. The strikers sought revenge and took the nearest at hand. Twice that spring the red flames shot up in the dead of night in the midst of the colony—the work of incendiaries. The most cruel of these deeds of wickedness was the setting fire to Eben-Ezer, the home of the male imbeciles. No lives were lost, for Bethel has her own brigade, her deacons training for this also, and the brothers more than once have proved themselves efficient firemen. The scene nevertheless was terrible; the poor imbecile epileptics, not understanding why in the night time they were dragged by main force out of their beds, but seeing flames, set up their shrieks and yells, fighting against their rescuers as for very life. But more terrible than this, and more heartrending, was the fact that scores of men stood by watching the ghastly scene, never lifting a finger; and not strong-armed men only, but women lost to all tenderness, gloated over the disaster. "Serve you right," they cried, "you pious sinners, for having turned honest folk out of house and home to make room for these wretches!" And mutterings went round, "See if we don't set fire to the lot of you."

Now, there was a grain of truth in this accusation. Farms had been bought up, but only when they were in the market, and in most cases the owners actually had come to Bodelschwingh offering to sell. But these decaying farm properties sometimes comprised sublettings, and these tenants could not be consulted when the property changed hands. "It is true," said Pastor von Bodelschwingh, "some twenty or thirty families of dependent folk in the course of these twenty years have thus lost their little cots. It was not their property, yet they looked upon it as such, having rented it for years. Against their will they were driven to seek quarters in the overcrowded city, where a plot of garden was an impossible luxury for such as they. There is therefore some truth in the charge, and *it becometh us in this also to fulfil all righteousness.*" And from that day the good pastor, over and above the many efforts upborne by his strong shoulders, made it his business to see to the housing of the poor. An association was formed, called "Workman's Home," the roots of which are struck in Bethel, where all the planning is done, and furthering aid given to this work of mercy also.

But Pastor von Bodelschwingh is a man who goes to the bottom of things;—mere chance charity, mere sentimentalism at any vision of distress, though it may yield momentary aid, is not what satisfies him. He went to the bottom of this also, and there found that much of the Socialism, so rampant in Germany, and threatening to sap the very foundations of society, has its root in the ill-housing of the working population. He made himself the champion of this grievance.

In a public lecture, delivered before the Social Congress in Berlin, he recounted how, as a young boy, fifty

years ago, he already had opportunity of studying the social problem, having his own childish thoughts then how it might be met. His sisters and their companions had a sewing class for the poor, but they were not themselves allowed to enter the homes of misery, the boy's tutor—a future pastor—being delegated to inquire into the people's needs, and he would take young Frederick with him. Here the boy had his first vivid impressions of the hunger, the cold, the cruel sufferings of the poor, and especially was he moved with what seemed to him the unjust portioning out of earthly goods between rich and poor: the rich might do with somewhat less, the poor need not be so very poor, the boy thought. One day there had been a state dinner in the Minister's palace, the boy watching the great preparations, and noticing the splendour. Simple as his parents were, his mother especially, on such a day they suited their station. A day or two after, being allowed to accompany his father out walking, he poured out his heart; and the father explained to him how that these things must be, and that, bad as they seemed, they were not without a redeeming point, since by the very luxuries of the rich many of the poor find a living. The boy was old enough to understand this, but still he insisted that the rich and great need not feast and dress quite so sumptuously, while so many went starving, and scarcely had a sufficiency of rags to keep out the cold. Especially would he grieve at the long suite of state rooms, standing empty and with blinds down, for the most part; and he would compare their gorgeous emptiness with the miserable garrets in which whole families were huddled together. He remembered having being taken by his tutor to see a poor widow, who, with seven children,

lived in such a garret; there was not even a fireplace, and only one bed in the room, which was somewhat enlarged at night by the only other piece of furniture excepting a table, a wooden bench pushed alongside. On this bench the mother slept leaving the bed proper to the seven children; there was not room for a second bed in the garret, even if the poor woman had had another. And the boy went to his own bed that night stung with shame at the comfort provided for him, his own spacious chamber where three or four other beds could have stood; his boyish charity would have taken in that widow and her seven children if only he could have done so. But these childish impressions were not lost; and the child is father of the man. The man is fast finding homes now for the struggling poor.

Bodelschwingh's idea is this: settle the working classes, each family in their own little house, with their own garden—their own acquired plot of land—and you nip all Socialism, all Nihilism, in the bud. This may sound Utopian in English ears; for where in this country of landlords are "own plots" for the people so easily to be had—their *real* own? We are, however, describing a working model, and it will be for thoughtful readers to draw their own inferences.

It is chiefly from the ranks of the embittered working classes of great cities that social democracy draws its recruits—draws them in ever-increasing numbers. And why are they embittered? For one reason, might not there be here also some want of elbow-room? Have you ever considered, you, who shut up your town house when the hot summer makes it unpleasant to you, what thoughts must rise in the mind of some factory-worker

slaving away in the same hot city? What is he likely to think, and feel, on passing these empty houses, visions to him of comfort and coolness, on his way from the stifling factory to the scarce less stifling tenement he calls his home? But Home is too beautiful a word. Is it wonder if his heart fills with envy at these empty palaces? Is it wonder if he thinks: Why are we so much worse off than they? That man would be satisfied with the tenth part of the house you calmly leave with blinds down for weeks and months. Bodelschwingh says he is ashamed to look such a man in the face; yet his is a modest little manse, and he leaves it but for the scantiest holiday. But then his sympathy enters into such a man's feelings; he does not approve of his levelling ideas, but he understands them: he understands how easy a prey such a man's mind is to the teachings of Socialism. Put that man in ever so humble a home, a real home, away from the stifling city; give him air, give him sunlight, give him a garden to move in, and his Socialism will be blown to the winds. There is no solving of the social problem except by putting ourselves alongside of such a man's feelings—then we shall understand him. Perhaps we ourselves would turn Socialists in that man's place.

The thing to try for, is: to lead that man to a sense of content; and it is astonishing how easily, according to Bodelschwingh, this is done. It *is* possible to give that man beauty for ashes—contentment for bitterness—a home to satisfy his humble need, even a beautiful and healthful home, for the fever-breeding, sin-and-misery waking hole in which he now sits, cursing you and his own cheerless fate. And, mind you, for that hole, in proportion, he pays treble the rent you pay for

your palace! Is it to be wondered at, if he is embittered?

He is more than embittered, he is hopeless, for he sees no way out; and there is another hopeless one beside him—the poor wife, working, perchance, in a factory too, or charing, or straw-plaiting, or anything; yet they scarce can keep body and soul together. Partly their own fault this, to be sure, since the public-house is their great comforter—what good to save your pennies when you see no way out? Without an aim, without some bright and shining star beckoning us onward, none of us would do much. But even fair Hope for these people sits in ashes, averting her face; they see no star, nothing to work for; they spend their little in drink, or, at best, in sheer improvidence; and their children grow up to this misery, continuing the same weary round.

But help that man, or rather show him how to help himself; for this recipe "beauty for ashes," this little home of his own, in his own garden, his own plot of land, is not a charity to be given him; he is to buy it, to acquire it honestly; and he can. The principle laid down is this: *Help the working classes by making them help themselves.*

Now for the working model:

They have an architect and a house-building office at Bethel, needing both for their own ever-enlarging tent. And among the epileptic patients there is an increasing number of men fit for office work, book-keepers, draughtsmen, men of this and that kind of technical proficiency for whom occupation is wanted. Here was a new opening for them; these all were brought into requisition. They set to work examining what

had been done in any country for the housing of the poor, they made calculations, drew plans, worked out proposals what might be done for their own neighbourhood, the working classes of Bielefeld. And presently the pastor from his own study window spied some plots of land on the hillside over against the colony. They were for sale. "I should like to buy that land," he said, "and settle some of these discontented workmen there with their families. I have an idea it would answer admirably, and no doubt they would pay me back in good time." He did buy that land. And then more of the epileptics, men who could only push the wheelbarrows or work with the spade, some twenty or thirty of them, might be seen day after day busy on that hillside, digging and levelling. And away at Hebron the bricks were made for this vision to be realised: *Workman's own little home on its own plot of land.* "And so," says Bodelschwingh, "our poor epileptics at the very outset made up for the accusation brought against them; their own hands actually raising the groundwork on which these new homes should stand."

Thus once more from this colony of stricken ones streams of healing began to flow, and Bethel, the mother of Wilhelmsdorf, becomes the mother of Workman's Home. Where anywhere on the face of the earth is there a colony of human misery so prolific of helpfulness, so successful in alleviating misery? "Our own sick ones have turned the first clod of earth for this and this new effort," says the pastor with a noble pride, for he loves these sick ones. They do not cumber the ground, they are the Master's helpers even in their trouble, and instruments of His mercy.

But the plan evolving was this: The great obstacle in the poor man's way is want of capital; if you can find the needful capital for him at a reasonable rate of interest, and if you turn that capital into a sinking fund he can pay it back by yearly payments; and it will not take more of his earnings, but considerably less, than he nows pays in mere rent. He now rents a wretched tenement; put him into a new, clean house, built specially for him, and tell him, if he sets to work thriftily, he may, in ten years or so, be owner of that house, soil and all. He may do this in even less than ten years, for it has been proved—a man entering into rights of ownership on the Bethel plan after one-third of the capital is paid up. Tell him, show him, how to set about it, and see if he will not! Why, you at once lift that man half a dozen pegs above his present level, even supposing he has all along been an honest working man! He feels he has attained the position of an honourable man of business, to whom capital is lent because he enjoys credit. What cannot be made of a man if he feels trusted and believed in? Above all, you have filled that man's heart with hope.

But here is the difficulty: who is going to believe in him—even the most honest, the most thrifty working man—if it is a question of lending him capital at 3½ per cent.? He undertakes to pay you back, but where is your security? Says Bethel, I will be security; I will be trustee for him, and the legal owner of the house until he has paid back one-third of the loan; I reserve to myself the right to buy him out if at any time he fail in his yearly payments, and I reserve pre-emption at the original price, if at any time he should propose

to sell—this in kindness to him, to protect him from speculators.

Bethel is a corporation which enjoys credit; and people are willing enough to invest sums in any undertaking for which Bethel goes bail, for Bethel is as safe as the Bank of England, and has security to offer in her own landed property. So Bethel, as a first step, borrowed capital at 3½ per cent., for which the "acquirers" of the little houses she undertook to build were to pay interest (*i.e.*, house rent), 3½ per cent., besides paying back the capital in easy stages. A working man usually pays 10 and 12 per cent. *in rent*, so there is room for paying back capital over and above the 3½ per cent. on the capital raised on his behalf.

For instance, the cost of one of these "Workmen's Homes" at Bielefeld averages £325, *including* the plot of land, and road expenses. The annual rent on this capital, at 3½ per cent., comes to £11 7s. 6d.; the top story is sub-let to another family at £7 7s. 6d., leaving to the "acquirer" the bottom story at £4—each story having, as a rule, three good-sized cheerful rooms and a kitchen; the cellar containing washhouse and storing-places, the garden, accommodation for a pig or goat, etc., being shared. The "acquirer," over and above the interest or rent, is pledged to pay back the capital at the rate of 2 per cent., burdening his yearly budget with another £6 10s.; he may do more, if able—this is the minimum; and this "paying back," of course, is simply paying his way into ownership. Altogether, the reader will see, here are two families worthily housed—a gain in every direction on tenements. What speculative owner would let to a working man three rooms and a kitchen and his share of the garden at seven guineas

a year—three shillings a week? It can be done: will any one try in this country—even if, on account of higher wages, the seven guineas must be called ten?

Another plan worked out by that pastor of epileptics is this: "Of course, even our credit is limited; we could not raise capital *ad infinitum*, but a loan of £5,000 can be obtained to-morrow if a hundred people join my building association with a subscription of 5s. a year—this being the difference of interest between 3½ and 4 per cent. Now any savings-bank or other public fund will lend capital at 4 per cent., and if you hundred friends can mulct yourselves each to the amount of 5s. a year, you enable us to loan out the capital thus obtained at 3½ per cent. to our honest working men who are trying for a house of their own; if you subscribe 10s. a year, we can let them have it at 3 per cent.: will you do this?" And a hundred people thus ready to help are actually found, for it is a beautiful plan; and, as we have seen, the £5,000 thus raised—as they build, not seeking their own interest—provides about thirty families with house and garden, one house, as a rule, for two families, top and bottom story; and, lo and behold! you have turned an embittered struggling lot into hopeful men and women. Is not this worth working for?

So they have a building-fund at Bethel, to which is added a building savings fund, into which any workman wishing to begin saving up towards a house of his own puts his sixpences and shillings as he can spare them; he being advised to have some few savings before offering for a house. Land is never bought till a number of married working men of good character, say a dozen or more, are ready to join the association, expressing their

willingness to become house owners under the conditions provided for them. Then only the houses are built; and by a beautiful thoughtfulness, they not only get a house, but they get one *as they would have it.* For this dozen or score of houses are not built as building societies run up houses in London, one as like the other as a dozen matchboxes set on end ; no, these houses are built to be a pleasure to the man ; more still, a pleasure to the wife who is to keep this home tidy, for one would have them love these little houses and be happy in them. Only the perfect love that would do the very best for these people could hit on this plan. It means, of course, untold extra work for that architect at Bethel—happily a man truly interested himself, an architect, in this, for Christ's sake—he is brother to one of the pastors ; but this extra work is gladly given, and though they have built nearly seventy houses, not two of them are alike.

When it is a question of drawing the plans, every intending owner and his wife come to the office and say what they would like ; and according to their needs, according to their wishes, even according to their fancies, if possible, the plans are drawn, and the little house is built. Also they may name the workmen they would wish employed, for they may have uncles, or cousins, or friends, who are masons, or carpenters, or plumbers, and at their desire, these will have the benefit. What a wondrous thing true charity is! *"Liebe macht erfinderisch"*—love is the cleverest of inventors—says the German proverb, and truly so, for love only, perfect brotherly love, can think of all these things. Again, what wisdom in this love! Does it not make these people believe in you? do they not see how truly you consult their welfare? Have you

not won them by the simplest of means, prevailing on them to make an effort themselves for the moral gains you have in view for them? Love, truly, is wise as a serpent.

Then, here is another wise thing: The dozen or score of intending owners, combining to be housed on a certain plot of land, form a sort of community among themselves: they actually engage *to be each other's keeper* in certain things. For instance, they have all undertaken to keep the public-house banished from their midst. If any of their number should ever turn his house into a public-house—no one could hinder him from obtaining a license for the sale of liquor—but if he does, *he forfeits three hundred pounds* to that community. He has entered into possession under this condition, and the rest of the house-owners, with Bethel at the head of them, have power to enforce this clause. So these little homes, indeed, are "beauty for ashes," kept pure from the devastating influences of drink. A man dwelling there has some distance to go before he finds a public-house; and the chances are he stays at home, if the home is made pleasant.

One of the great attractions, making these homes pleasant, is the principle laid down, and defended by Bodelschwingh with all his warmth, that a *working man's house shall stand in its own garden*—a garden large enough to provide the two families living in that house with potatoes and vegetables; the working man—he should be home from his work at half-past six or seven—spending his spring and summer evenings in that garden. They even strive to inculcate the principle that a man in that garden shall plant his own apple and pear-tree, there being a wonderful power, says Bodelschwingh, in the

trees he has planted for making a man *heart*-owner of his house. He will much less be tempted ever to sell that house, if he has stocked its garden with trees of his own rearing; it will be his home, and the home of his children after him. There is provision in each house, also, for keeping a couple of pigs or goats, which will cost the people next to nothing, and bring in a clear gain. Bodelschwingh estimates the garden produce of half an acre to be worth about five pounds to these people, *if it is their own property*, which is a great deal more than ordinary farming yields. And then there is the moral gain already mentioned, which is greater still. "Where does your husband spend his evenings?" asked an inquiring friend of a housewife established in one of these little houses. "He used to go to the 'public,' when we lived in the town yonder, but since we came here the garden keeps him at home." That man was being saved by his apple and pear trees, by the produce of the soil, the work of his hands. And social democracy will die out in such places, for these people have little left to grumble at. The idea of two families in one house is just this: that, as children grow up, a married son or daughter may live under the same roof with their parents, or a young couple may take in the old people as tenants; also, that the little children in any house should never be left uncared for, if the mother has to absent herself. And lastly, they can help one another in sickness.

It is but a few years since the first house was built, and the plan has fully answered. The best proof is this: that many of these people are paying up at double the rate they are pledged to by contract. The figures are: that on forty houses built with a capital of fourteen thousand

pounds, about *four thousand pounds have already been paid back*, so that quite a number of these thrifty "acquirers" have entered into the rights of ownership. What will not even a working man do, if you help him to his own little house—his own plot of land? These men have saved and saved, keeping every penny from the drink-shop for the pride of this ownership. And are they not likely to continue respectable and thrifty, having proved to themselves, and to others, what may be done with their ordinary wages in half a dozen years? Help a man to be respectable, to respect himself, will he not thank you, and try and be so? For there is manhood sufficient, even in your working man. Much will depend, of course, *how* you help him, and *what* star of hope you kindle in his heaven. At any rate these people are not objects of charity, though you have assisted them with a wondrous charity: you have made independent men of them. It must of course be said, it is the better-class working men who apply for the privilege. You have got to begin with those most worthy, hoping for the blessing to spread gradually by the forces of example and rivalry.

And are these people really grateful for the great thing done for them? Well, this pastor says, with Gordon: "Do good to people as if they were chairs and tables"; that is, not looking for gratitude, lest you be disappointed; but experience shows you find some gratitude—at any rate, you see these people in an improved condition, and that is what you were mainly seeking.

There are now three such colonies of "Workman's Home" round about Bielefeld, but the man who has set this great work going is no provincialist; his horizon is

wide, and his charity large-hearted. The Building Association, started under the auspices of Bethel, has subdivided its functions; it is now, firstly, a local society, working as shown above; it is, secondly, a centre for spreading just principles all over Germany.

Something had already been done in Germany by great factory owners, men of charitable instincts; and the State also had provided dwellings for the miners in its direct employ. But the principle emanating from Bethel goes further: it says, Help the working classes by making them help themselves. Be their patrons in thrift, go surety for them in the raising of capital, lend them your intellectual capital, planning for them, arranging matters for them; but let the main thing, the object-gaining industry, and above all, its reward, be theirs. Let them have all the advantage, all the profit of the building schemes you are interested in, let them see it is purely and simply for their benefit; and you may educate them to almost anything. Unselfish love is the greatest power on earth: it will even help you to get rid of a nest of social democrats, and people the land with contented citizens.

Bethel is setting the example: she is doing a noble work, lending her own great machinery, her willing hands, her name, her credit, without burdening the undertaking with working expenses; she is steward of its aims, laying out the capital, collecting the returns and laying them out again—that is all. And the example is being copied; the Association *Arbeiterheim* (Workman's Home) is spreading; and what though it take fifty years or more to realise these great hopes for the country at large, yet surely such a beginning is a hopeful thing.

Pastor von Bodelschwingh is indefatigable in proving to the nation the economic advantages in the interest of the nation itself, not only as a negative blessing in stamping out, or at least in materially lessening, Socialistic tendencies, but in all reality a gain. For one thing, a more healthy generation than can possibly be looked for in overcrowded city dwellings will be the outcome; crime will decrease and the standard of morality be raised. The authorities know well enough what they owe to these efforts; the three Emperors have given their fullest approval, and shown it by yearly gifts. And thus protected, the Association "Workman's Home," planted as a mustard seed at Bethel, has every prospect of developing into a spreading tree under the branches of which a contented working class may dwell.

But in order to aid these endeavours on a larger scale, turning the effort into a national enterprise, the wise-headed pastor has hit on a plan worthy of a statesman.

The English reader will be aware that public provision has been made in Germany for the insurance of every working man and working woman towards sickness and old age. It is an admirable law, certainly as regards the kindliness of its intentions, resulting in a fund of millions. Now all this money is collected on behalf of the working man, and his own pocket has furnished one-half, the employer paying the other half; it is all intended for his good, but he does not as yet see this,—he may not see it for years to come. He looks upon it as an extra tax, though it is levied but in pennies; and though wise men are strong in approval of the enforced provision, yet among the working classes for whom these benefits are intended there is a good deal of grumbling. But whatever the intention and

ultimate benefit, here are great sums collected, requiring to be put out to use. How best to do this for some time past has occupied the attention of financiers; but the pastor of Bethel has worked out the following scheme.

His plan in short is: This capital, collected in part out of the working man's savings and altogether for his eventual benefit, should also in the meantime be employed for his benefit and flow back to him in loans—in other words, it should be invested in Workmen's Homes all over the country. On the strength of the trial made at Bielefeld, Bodelschwingh shows that this capital would be a sort of revolving fund which every ten years or so would replenish itself, to be used again and again for a purpose than which no truer remedy could be found for pacifying the great discontent among the working population. Moreover they would thus see that this money is indeed intended to benefit them; they would have the advantage of insurance in case of sickness and in old age over and above the benefit of a house of his own for every thrifty man. The pastor pleads that this money should be obtainable for this purpose in loans at 3½ per cent., submitting that the working man from a public savings bank only gets 2½ per cent. for his deposits, and the difference between his getting and giving should not be too great.* The capital would be quite safe if managed

* His appeal is being responded to in one province and another, there being Home Rule in Germany in such matters. Why should not the funds of the Post Office Savings Bank in this country be available for such purpose? These funds also are largely out of the poor man's pocket, the Post Office giving interest at 2½ per cent.; so the Post Office might still do business if Workman's Home loans could be forthcoming at 3 or 3½ per cent.!

on the Bielefeld plan by "Workman's Home" committees to be formed throughout the country. These committees would act as the working man's patron, even as Bethel does, not "patronising" him, but managing for him, and going surety for him. Men are to be found, says Bodelschwingh, who will be proud to give such honorary service for so great and beneficent an object; and three men only are required—an experienced land steward, a capable architect, and a good treasurer. "As for the architect," says the Pastor, "it is a great deal more difficult, and altogether a truer art, to build well in the interest of poor folk, than to build palaces."*

A further proposal is that young folk about to marry might apply as intending house acquirers, if, between them, they have saved up say twenty-five pounds, the man not to be younger than six-and-twenty, the woman at least to be out of her teens, and the latter, moreover, should be required to give satisfactory proof of understanding something about housekeeping—thus to counteract thriftless marriages. The house in any case should be an incitement to, and a reward of, thrift, diligence, and respectable living.

Also, it would be a marked gain, tending to the general well-being of the country, thus to stem the ever-growing influx of the working classes into the great cities, drafting them back into such colonies of "Workman's Home," their own property, at a wholesome distance from the centres of industry, the railways running special workmen's trains, at a moderate rate, morning and night. And the chiefest gain, one

* The "Workman's Home" at Bielefeld should be inspected both for costs and pleasing results.

not to be overestimated, would be this, that the country gradually would be pacified, and Social Democracy would have to seek a soil elsewhere.

The pastor urges that the answer to his plan should not be "Paul, thou art mad"; he says, he believes, on the contrary—for he has already proved it—that he is proposing reasonable things. Yet there is time to save the country, to elevate the masses, by giving them what we simply owe them: *more light, more air*—aye "elbow-room" to live decent lives.

Is this pastor too sanguine, too much of an enthusiast, too Utopian? It would not seem so, to judge by what already has been done; yet even if his hopes were too great, too ideal, fully to realise—it being indeed a mighty scheme—it is something, surely, at least to have tried; to be trying at this moment. Hope is strong, and he knows there is a strength unconquerable called faith—the faith of which One has said it removes mountains. Assuredly it is well to try for the removal of this mountain of hopelessness oppressing the ill-housed poor. But a measure of success seems guaranteed, inasmuch as the idea has caught in Germany, if one may judge by the fact that, from all parts, those interested in the question apply at Bethel (*i.e.*, at the office *Arbeiterheim* established there), for estimates, for building plans, for the experience collected at that office; and this office, having constituted itself central office for a national endeavour, only too gladly meets the demand—indeed, they have undertaken to furnish complete building plans gratis to any one applying for "Workman's Home" purposes. That architect at Bethel is an overworked, at any rate a well-worked, man, but then no one at Bethel considers time

his own; and it is curious to note that the active secretary of this great scheme is that same young man, saved from the morphia "prison," in whom Pastor von Bodelschwingh believed sufficiently to go bail for him for a wife and a house. These men from the Cave of Adullam, at any rate some of them, train into fit workers. He is private secretary for the pastor in the morning, and "Workman's Home" secretary in the afternoon—no sinecure, surely, even with a helper or two.

The eye of the German Emperor is on these efforts. His Majesty has repeatedly expressed his warm approval, and all well-disposed thoughtful men in the country—of course there are enemies, too—all who truly wish well by the people, have long learned to apply to any effort emanating from Bethel, the Psalmist's words: "Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Thus, as far as promising circumstances go, the great scheme seems not too great to realise. It is on a sound business basis—nothing Utopian in this respect; Bodelschwingh's schemes, with all their idealism, always bear that test! The yearly balance sheets of "Workman's Home" may be inspected, and will be found models of economy and thrift.

One wonders, could such a scheme ever be thought of in Britain? All deference to the efforts of those who strive to introduce wholesomeness into the overcrowded tenements; but that is not "beauty for ashes" in any real sense! It is not Workman's *Own*. The garden is wanting, the apple and pear tree of his own planting; the poetry is wanting; the strong moral force residing in the little word "own" is wanting!

Could there ever be a poor man's "own" in this country, apple trees and all? Yes, possibly, when the

slowly moving wheel of progress will have somewhat reformed British land tenure! Then a British workman also may hold an "own." He too may then rise six pegs above his present level, and the many public-houses diminish. What incitement has he *now* to be thrifty, to lay by, to be his own helper? He does not as a rule lay by even for the rainy day, and when illness overtakes him, or cold weather, he is a hopeless out-of-work. But the root of the mischief of all social distress, as Bodelschwingh rightly says, is the want of a home, a home inalienable, a home worthy to be improved by the sweat of your brow, the labour of your hands—the want, in fact, of something to live for, something to attain by diligent work. The bright and shining star called Hope is wanting. Could it not be kindled for the working classes in this country also? Is not there land enough and to spare? One feels inclined to say, with Boy Bodelschwingh, "Could not the rich do with a *little* less, and the poor not be *quite* so poor?"

Think of the hopelessness, the homelessness, cooped up in East London! What star of hope ever rises on that sky? It is a mean thing, says that pastor, our comforting the poor with hopes of a better Beyond . could we not first do something for a better *Here?* Give them something to live for, give them a more decent home, a home worthy that name, and half your preaching will not be wanted. This is a strong saying for a pastor, and such a pastor; but it is true. We are so ready with our tracts, with our city missionaries, our lady visitors; and then we go home to our comfortable drawing-room and think we have done the kind thing by the "lower classes." It has become the fashion for beneficent people who have money to spare to buy up poor people's

houses—more properly, the abodes of poverty, for they never were *theirs*—whitewash and clean them, and keep a sort of an eye on the tenants by collecting the weekly rents—not by any means a bad investment. It even is a kind thing, but it is not the kindest thing—for one thing it is too patronising. Why should the working man's family have their house broken into once a week by the inspecting lady visitor? All well and good, if your tenants can only be got to walk in leading-strings; but what if you aimed higher, made free men and women of them with a wholesome ambition of their own, by giving them a home to be truly theirs? Could not the same beneficent people do the still nobler thing, devoting such money they now invest in buying up rows of tenements, to the formation of a building fund, be satisfied with a return of 3 or 3½ per cent., and let the capital create a *true* Workman's Home after the fashion of Bodelschwingh? Is the English working man less worthy of this trust, this being lifted to a higher level, than a German working man? Do not believe it. Try him and you will soon raise a generation of freeborn Britons indeed, even among your working men. That little word "own" possesses a wondrous charm: it will lock up public-houses, it will educate the people far more quickly than any mere patronage of yours ever could hope for. It is curious that folk are mostly what we make them. Children are what we make them, and the common people are exactly what we make them. Now, the English working classes for generations have been called *poor people*—an unbearable expression—and consequently they *are* "poor"—poor of spirit even. Why should you call a man "poor" who works for an honest wage, however true the epithet

"struggling" may be? Let him rather know you see he is struggling, and help him to struggle—to struggle out of the mire, beyond the drink and the filth into the breathing spaces even a working man should reach. This is the meaning of "beauty for ashes," and the meaning of workman's *own*.

One other aspect. See how the Workman's Home dovetails with all other social efforts, the labour colony, and the whole chain of provision for the unemployed. These will presently not be wanted. For these homes must needs stand in an inverse ratio to the need of labour colonies; a generation will rise which will not so readily become "unemployed." The memories of a happy home go a long way, even in a working man's life. One main idea of Bodelschwingh's "garden" is, that the *mothers* should no longer have cause to go to factory-work, but stay at home, attending to that garden, attending to house and home, with a chance of bringing up the children in a more wholesome way. This would be the natural result of your true charity; these people would *save* presently all they now spend in rent. And mothers are mothers the world over; even the mother in humble life, with a home she can take some pride in, will be a better mother to her children than if she wears out her strength behind some spinning-wheel, or passing sheets of paper through a printing press, turning into a machine herself. It is this terrible humdrum of factory-work, killing the body and killing the heart, which Bodelschwingh, for the women at least, would replace by that garden, that home of their own. For turn about this little word "own," and it reads *won*. Home-life won; family-life won; home-blessings won—"Beauty for Ashes."

CHAPTER XIV

THE BROCKEN-SAMMLUNG

"Gather up the fragments."

SOME little children we knew, growing up in a widowed home where things were scanty, had contracted a habit, almost as soon as they could speak, of meeting any new thing entering that home with their cautious misgivings. "Whatever will it cost?" and "Whoever is to pay for it?" these mites would ask. It was a true question with these children, for they had often seen their mother's tears. Yet one was sorry for them, for it is childhood's privilege never to wonder at "What will it cost?" Bethel, too, is "child" in this; she does her work not influenced by "what it will cost." But if the reader of these chapters ask this question, that is another matter; he even has a right to ask, and we must endeavour to answer.

The observant reader will have formed some idea already, from the hints strewn about these pages; but we will try and sum up the main points concerning the Bethel treasury. We will begin with the latest development, for visitors almost invariably begin there, feeding their wonder on the astonishing "fragment collection," the realm of the ingenious *Brocken-king*. Some time before General Booth propounded his plan of a "Salvage Brigade," the "gathering up of fragments" was thought

of at Bethel. "*Sammelt die übrigen Brocken*," is the German text, hence the name of *Brocken-sammlung*. But, first, this also has *grown*, and grown out of Bethel's invariable habit of being the ready comforter of "all who mourn"—of all in trouble, coming to her for advice, for aid, for comfort.

We have shown how she trains her officials, first helping them, and then being helped in her work by them—the most perfect, the most Christian, example of reciprocity we ever heard of. Some years ago, a gentleman sought refuge at Bethel. He was not an "unfortunate" in the sense that he had committed any wrong, or even in being wanting in those capacities which we name collectively self-help; but he was sorely tired of the world. His was a life on which the Great Refiner had laid a shadow—no matter of what kind—but the silver had grown bright, and the *Brocken-kōnig* is one of those whose "life is hid," even as St. Paul's was. He came to Bethel seeking rest, seeking Christian fellowship, seeking a corner where he might do some work for the Master. He had been in business, and at first he simply was put on the staff—he was accountant for the Sarepta treasury. But his trouble returned; he was laid aside, unable to devote himself to any work for months, and his place got filled up. When he was well again, the pastor was planning another niche for him—he knew by that time the simple fidelity of the man, and, what was nobler still, his rare humility. There are many walking under a shadow in this life who will be stars of the kingdom to come. So the pastor was planning a niche; but the man himself had hit upon a corner—a plan of work unique. He was, by this time, at home in the colony, feeling himself part and parcel of the place; he had

entered the commonwealth. Now, in a commonwealth —at least, in such a one where the spirit of Christianity rules—folk discover their capacities, because they look for them, anxious to turn them to use for one another. This is how in such a colony so many strokes of genius abound; it is the power of invention pertaining to outgoing love. We have not heard that this man did rare business while he was in business, but he does rare business now. He had set his heart on making money for the colony—for money touched by Love and used by Charity is no longer dross. He started a "salvage brigade," but in this way: printed slips went forth from the Bethel press, inviting their friends all over the country to send them anything they "didn't want," about their premises, any cast-off articles, any rubbish littering their houses. And they were invited to send these things, if possible, in ten-pound parcels, because the Imperial Post carries ten pounds in weight at threepence under fifty miles, or sixpence over that distance, and no one minds a sixpence by way of getting rid of a ten-pound lot of rubbish, the *Brocken-sammlung* thus collecting its stock-in-trade free of expense. The Imperial Post, however, has had to start a special branch-office in the precincts of the colony, overwhelmed with the parcels and letters marked "Bethel." The idea appears to have appealed to the thriftiness of the nation, and it is simply marvellous to behold what is sent: garments, from the valuable gold-embroidered Court dress-coat of cabinet ministers, down to the most ridiculous kind of articles from anybody's private wardrobe —just anything people do not any longer require, but which Bethel, somehow, can turn to use again. Just think of gentlemen, or of their female representatives,

sending their broken braces! you see them hung up by the hundreds. What for? Well, the leather mostly is good, new straps are fitted to the button-hole slips—it gives employment to some of the patients—and thus, not only the male portion of the colony is kept in braces at nominal cost, but any poor man in the neighbourhood can come and buy a pair for twopence or threepence; for Bethel always thinks of others beside herself. This is just an example; you could write a book on the *Brocken-sammlung*.

We have said the *Brocken-man* himself hit upon this stroke of genius; but things in the kingdom of God often are the property of several inventors,—possibly by some genius divine, lest any man vaunt himself. And thus it has to be recorded that a poor widow away on the Rhine also took her share of the invention. Never having heard of *Brocken* or salvage brigades or anything of the sort, this poor widow, with the love of God in her heart, and longing to do something for Bethel, having not even any halfpennies to spare, bethought herself of widow's mites *in kind*. She wrote to the pastor that for a long time she had collected all the cork stoppers she could get hold of in her neighbourhood, and that she had quite a garretful of them now. Could they possibly be of any use? In fact, this poor woman's letter coincided with the *Brocken-man's* early thoughts of the scheme. Her heap of old corks was the first instalment of "rubbish" sent; and it is quite true to say that out of her innocent yet love-inspired collection of wine and beer bottle-stoppers has grown, what now fills several houses, and yields employment for some forty patients and men of the Cave of Adullam, and brings in about £2,000 clear annual gain. At least, this figure has been nearly reached for

the year just closed. But the *Brocken-sammlung*, though it fills three houses, is but a baby as yet, a few years old: give it time and see what that *Brocken-king* will make of it! Not in mere flattery has he been called —not fragment-gatherer, but fragment-*king*. He is a king of inventiveness. He, too, enjoined us not to say anything in praise of the colony; but how can one help just telling what one has seen? He has lately gathered his men, such as are not epileptic patients, into a household, of which, worn and weary as he is, he has begged to be "house-father," that he might seek to serve them, help them on the upward way.

If a "king," he is a humble one; and certainly not in his own estimation, but in his own way he is a genius. Here is an example.

Many of these incoming fragments are large consignments; so presently deal-boxes upon deal-boxes began to litter the establishment. At first they were used for firewood, but the *Brocken-king* after a while declared: This is expensive firewood. And he set his business brain to work; he offered his empties to various wholesale houses, and one, a soap manufacturer, closed with him. But the latter would not pay in cash, he pays in soap, with the result that the *Brocken-sammlung* has started a soap depôt; while quantities of empty little bottles coming in—people do send such funny things: fancy sending your empty hair-oil flasks!—put them up to the idea of filling them again, which can be done cheaply enough, for these sort of things at hairdressers and perfumers' sell at 250 per cent. profit, and the *Brocken-sammlung*, not being nearly so rapacious, drives a thriving trade with the neighbourhood. We ought to have mentioned above that the cork stoppers

are sold to a manufacturer who turns them out again as linoleum.

And as for rags leaving the *Brocken-sammlung*—woollen stockings, old clothes fit for the unravelling of texture only—you should see the towering waggons leaving the place, sackfuls by the score, returning presently as bales of new goods.

What do you think your photograph album-covers are made of, your handsome leather blotting books, your little dress-combs? Old boots and shoes are sent to the *Brocken-sammlung* in alarming numbers; what can be mended up again are mended up and sold. But many are beyond patching; they are picked to pieces, the "uppers" are sent to a manufactory in Alsace which works them down and turns them out as pressed-leather articles, the soles by-and-by seeing the light again as vulcanite combs and things. And did you know that half the "Japanese" lacquered wares we buy so cheap are made in Alsace of old book-covers and the like? The *Brocken-sammlung* knows all that, turning its "fragments" to good account.

This is very instructive; it shows there really *is* nothing new under the sun—except what is fresh of God's own making, and even He has made nature a great refuse-gatherer, the autumn's decay being the seed-bed of the spring's new bloom. It is instructive, though of course in itself nothing new; else wholesale rag-pickers would not have been known to become millionaires. But he who runs may read: it has seemed to us that Bethel herself is a refuse-gatherer, collecting the fragments of sin-worn humanity: has not Christ Himself said "*gather them up* that nothing perish"? meaning the five-loaf fragments

when He said so, but is it not His holy meaning for each and all of the "least of them"? Gather them up—"it is not the will of your Father in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish!" Gather them up! Yes, this book will have shown that Bethel in truth is a great *Brocken-sammlung* herself, taking in the "fragments" under the purifying hand of the affliction upon them; taking in the "fragments," the sinking, the undone; gathering them in simple obedience to the Master's behest "that nothing perish." And who shall say how many by her instrumentality are being clothed with the new garment, are entering the new life, leaving old things behind them, and becoming new creatures? A future day only will reveal this, when all things are new.

But to return to the *Brocken-sammlung*—it not only tells of business, it tells of charity. There are quantities of old clothes in tolerable condition sent in. Everything on arriving is disinfected. Then some of the women patients are set to work, to sort the things, to mend them, to make them fit for wear again; and if you enter the *Brocken* shop, you see for what use. They are sold, quite cheap, to the working population of the neighbourhood — quite cheap, for Bethel has a motherly heart for the poor, that is, the struggling folk round about. She could put double the prices on the things, but she does not; though living by charity herself, she is ever ready with her own charity, and she thinks it gain sufficient, if over these *Brocken* some of her patients are occupied, the things themselves going at nominal prices, to make the meeting of ends a little more easy in working men's homes round about. The

Brocken-king is thoroughly imbued with Bodelschwingh's spirit, which is a giving rather than a taking.

The Fatherland is noted for its smoking propensities, and little boys and girls upon a hint from the *Brocken-king* have set themselves to watch for the little conical clippings of their father's or elder brother's cigars—you see these contributions from smokeland collecting in many a German family, and in the *Brocken-sammlung* you may vent your surprise over a giant boxful of them. They go back to the cigar manufactory, undergo preparation, and start afresh as "blend,"—quite valuable they are, collected in such quantity. Little boys and girls, too, collect used postage stamps for Bethel, and they have been told to send the envelopes bodily, these envelopes yielding a threefold gain: firstly, work for the imbecile epileptic children, who can manage to cut out the stamps; secondly, the paper, which goes to the paper mills; thirdly, the stamps themselves, which are handed over to the postage stamp bazaar spoken of on a former page, and which, originally a branch of the *Brocken-sammlung*, now does business independently, as we have seen, requiring a house of its own.

Old books too—what *is* not sent to that wonderful place? A second-hand bookshop is the outcome; the *Brocken-king*, however, has an eye on this stray literature, much of which is simply burned, for books should be wholesome food. But the population round about can buy good books, and instructive books, of every kind, very cheap at the *Brocken* bookshop. The books are catalogued and business done by post. Epileptic patients, educated men, are at work here.

So this is the *Brocken-sammlung*, and it illustrates the management of the place—frugal, far-seeing, thrifty,

successful; a growth like everything else there, and grown from a seed of brotherly kindness—a man in trouble helped, he growing into an army of helpfulness. It is the way of the Kingdom. What a wonderful thing such a colony is, which, never seeking them, finds such workers! But it is simply a gathering of like to like—it is the powerful attraction of Spirit-taught things.

The yearly expenditure of Bethel is about £60,000 to £70,000, apart from the labour colony, spoken of separately, but including everything else we have mentioned; it means about £20 a year per head of the colony—there being over three thousand souls, counting the out-stations. Surely this is reasonable, considering *what is done!* Exceptional land investments of course are extra, but these figures, besides all current expenses, include the ordinary building going on, the constant enlarging of the tent, the manifold charity dispensed, even in far-away Africa. It is because of the vastness of the undertaking, and the mutual helpfulness, that this is possible. They cannot of course keep their patients, or indeed any one, on £20 a year—this figure too means "reciprocity." Union is strength, even as regards the lessening of expenses; everybody there works for everybody else, and that is why they can do it at such moderate cost. It has to be borne in mind that the great wealth of Bethel lies in her *unpaid workers;* this is her real treasury, without which not the tenth part of that work were possible. As for the patients, for the bulk of them but nominal sums are paid—no one is refused because he cannot pay, if his claim appeal otherwise; and if he does not pay, money is forthcoming from some other source. The first-class patients, those kept as ladies and gentlemen, pay the

usual boarding-house prices, £50 to £80, in some cases even £100, according to requirements. The charge for poorer patients is £20 to £25 per annum; but in many cases not half of this is really received, the claims of poverty, even of poor parishes, being readily taken into account. Altogether about £20,000 is coming in for the 1,400 patients, rich and poor, paying and non-paying—in other words, about £14 per head. This is barely one-third of all current expenses; the remaining two-thirds, and everything else that is wanted, year by year, being found in their own beautiful ways.

The harvest contributions *in kind* of those Ravensberger Christians, for instance, are never forgotten—these being included in the yearly budget above-mentioned; and since it is a coal-mining country, even pit-owners of the neighbourhood remember Bethel, sending their waggon loads of coal, not expecting to be paid. True, not first-class coal generally is sent, but Bethel has splendid stove arrangements, and burning the "small stuff" keeps everybody well warmed. Could not English pit-owners find room for their "small stuff" in the Kingdom of Mercy?

Then there is the penny collection (p. 71), mostly among school-children, which never fails with its annual £1,500 or so. Bethel, in fact, is sure of her friends and is never in a position of alarming the country with agonised cries of empty coffers. True, Bodelschwingh is a rare beggar, but even his begging is ideal: done so calmly—so nobly we had almost said, and with such certainty of response. Germany has not by any means the wealth of England; nor—though she has some noble givers on her lists—is it the contributions of the wealthy by which Bethel is chiefly supported; but, as we have

seen, by the self-imposed tithes of a people whose riches are of the wealth unseen.

We have shown how, twice over, thank-offering pennies came to the rescue of special effort. A little more than a year ago Bethel found her supply of water run short. They looked for a spring up in the hills, to be brought down by means of an aqueduct, the "bringing down" to be done by her own patients; they had found one, but it necessitated the buying of a farm through which that water rill took its course; £2,500 were required,—that is 50,000 shillings. Bodelschwingh's appeal went forth for 50,000 "quarts of water" —simply enough, just "water for our patients, they need it"—and in the course of three months or so, not 50,000 but 60,000 "quarts" had come in—Bodelschwingh somehow always gets the overflowing measure. They came from all sorts of people, rich and poor; folk liked the idea, for surely it was the "cup of cold water"; and, as usual, many a pretty message graced this giving, many a story of the kind which is chronicled by some angel. One evening last winter, as we were sitting by the pastor's side at one of the weekly gatherings of the sisters, he read them a letter just come with a "quart of water"—fourteen *sous*—sent by a German crossing-sweeper or rag-picker in Paris, one of the Pastor's own old flock, who years ago had been in his Sunday-school. He had done extra work for these *sous* carrying earth loads for a gardener for a fortnight. Surely this shows the power of attraction of the spirit at work at Bethel! It is because this man and his labour of love are so thoroughly believed in, he can put out his appeals; and the response is as certain as the incomings of the Bank of England.

But more; these 50,000 shillings after all are not sunk as a dead investment, bringing that water to the colony and nothing more. Some would be satisfied with this, for the water was greatly needed. But money doubles and trebles directly in that man's hand, doing double and treble work. We have said a farm had to be bought because of the water. Not many weeks passed before a house-father sallied forth with a band of patients to turn that farm into one of their out-stations. So the water is got, and the farm is got, and a work is set on foot; and that farm has entered the circle of reciprocity, keeping itself going, and helping to keep the colony going, looking after some of its patients. If this is not financial genius, it is something very much like it.

Here is another example: Behind Hebron, nestling on the hill slope, is a beautiful homestead, with its own fields and plantations. It was for sale some six or seven years ago, and some one having just mooted the question of a "home of rest," where the brothers might recruit when worn and in need of a change, it was bought there and then,—they never consider long at Bethel, for things are sure to "pay." This station, named Pella, is fast refunding itself; it is a lovely retreat for any rest-needing brother, and they—that is, the house-father and his staff, not the rest-needing brothers—have charge of about a dozen *pensionnaires*, paying patients, pastors and professors and suchlike, who have overdone their brains. It is just the place for them; it does its work for the colony as the Pella of the brothers, and it does not cost anything.

Telling our story, we have mentioned the home products of the colony, the work done by the patients; this, of course, also stands for "funds," and is balanced against

the expenditure. The work of the patients yields about £4,000 a year; it has, however, to be borne in mind that, for the larger part, their work can scarcely be counted in cash, yielding its own substantial evidence in buildings, improvements of property, etc. The whole value of the Bethel property is put down at £250,000, against which stands a debt of £75,000; this debt including her borrowings for great schemes, such as, for instance, the starting of the Labour Colony, for which a loan of £15,000 was obtained. But some of these borrowings, be it noted, are free of interest; given because the work is so thoroughly believed in.

Then the home provinces make yearly grants, about £3,000—apart from Wilhelmsdorf—having in return the right of sending poor patients both to Sarepta and to Bethel. Besides this, Bethel has permission from the authorities to go house-to-house collecting in these provinces—this instead of sending out letters for subscriptions, as is done here. £10,000 or so is thus collected yearly. It is not begging, it is an authorised calling for free-will contributions on behalf of the afflicted within such province, there being no poor-rate in Germany.

And Bethel's way of setting about this is very charming. Some sixty collectors are employed. Who are they? We had almost said, they are the blind and halt and maimed of the country round about. But, indeed, they are something very much like it. It is, like everything else, a charity within a charity. Those are made collectors who for some reason or other, generally reasons of health, are more or less unfit for their real work—an asthmatic tailor, for instance, or a consumptive stonemason; it will do them good to be sent for change of air

about the country. They get about four or five shillings a day while collecting, for they are on their own keep, besides railway expenses, but they only get it *while* they collect, which is three or four times a year, a few weeks at a time, returning to their own employment between. (At least in most cases; some few are permanently engaged and settled in the outskirts of the colony.) Now this is not only a wondrous charity to these men, it is an actual saving to the colony, for they do not need to pay the bulk of their collectors the whole year round, nor engage them at a salary. Is not this financial genius, and yet charity of purest kind, even beneficence, for the rare kindliness of the thought? These men carry the colony's authorised books, in which everything is entered by the subscribers; the plan is quite safe from abuse. Some of these collectors have been in Bethel's service for years. As one discovers these things, one no longer wonders that the colony works successfully, for kindness must repay itself. And you cannot inquire into anything at Bethel, but you come upon some such kindness at the bottom. *Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, but Charity is kind! is kind!* They hardly know the beauty of their own work at Bethel—it is plain they do not, for their humility is genuine; they do their work, and there is an end of it, as far as they are concerned, but the kindness running through everything, the simple kindness—what is it, if not just Christlike? When we asked the pastor why at such a place they do not keep a chronicler, so that an unfortunate story-seeker could draw information from him, he gave us a smile. We felt almost ashamed of the question. "Oh no," he said, "these things are best forgotten." Yet it is for example they should be written, engraven on stone even; and for

example we have written them. It was not easy to get at them, but we felt armed with the key of sympathy; and what we have written, however inadequate, is true.

We are afraid our writing will let loose a swarm of visitors upon the colony; but no one has any time there for mere sightseers. When those magistrates had been —they came at an unfortunate moment, else they, of course, being a deputation and on business, would not have needed to have recourse to our marshalling—some one said to the pastor in our hearing, there really was need for a regular appointment—a person knowing all about everything, and fit to take charge of visitors. "Oh no," said he with that smile of his; "we are not a bear show."

Yet Bethel never is without visitors; there is a special "hospice" set apart for them. Friends of the patients are received there, and so is any one who has any business, any true call for troubling the colony. And any reader into whose heart the seed-sowing of this story has fallen, and fallen on good ground, any one anxious to "go and do likewise," will be heartily welcome: even in that case no one will have much time to devote to him; but let him go and see for himself and bring away a great impulse, and *do* something in his own country to prove he has not been in vain. True friends, in short, are welcome there—friends of the afflicted, the hungry, the homeless—and to such the story of Bethel will be an open book.

We have said the good folk there had asked us not to "say anything in praise"; and they did beg of us, since we were bent on telling their story, to be sure and "look for the *Schatten-seiten* as well"—the imperfections, the shadows! But now that we have written the book,

given the picture, we fear we have not put in any *Schatten-seiten* at all; but, indeed, we honestly have looked for them, and we only remember *one*. Anxious to be truthful, we will give it. Some of these houses might with advantage be turned out for a thorough airing—the ventilation is not up to modern requirement. But be it remembered the colony has *grown*, and grown out of farmhouses largely. Moreover, simple charity, rather than sanitation, has had the planning. There is no denying this is a *Schatten-seite*, but it is the only one we have noticed, and it is being improved.

But, seriously, no common-sense reader, no one of any Christian insight, will think for one moment that at this place, though it be a Bethel, and however lovely its work, there are no *Schatten-seiten*—no imperfections. A colony of three thousand human beings, however noble its scope, will have its shortcomings. But they will be of a kind not seen by an outside critic in their just proportion, and they will be most keenly felt by the workers themselves. A stay in their midst of a few weeks, even of a few months, will scarcely reveal such imperfections; nor was it our business to look for them: it would even be unjust to do so; for the "perfections" are the reality outshining them. We have not idealised the story of Bethel, though we have set it forth as an *ideal*, for such it is, if by an 'ideal' you mean a thing great in its own high aims, a thing greater in its humility, a thing greatest of all in the full measure of success given to such humility, a thing, therefore, pure and noble despite what of imperfection may cling to it, and *fit to stand as an example*. And Bethel is this. Her imperfections will be the human shortcomings of all Christian endeavour, cleaving even to Spirit-born

beauty while yet in this mortal coil; the true soul within ever striving to overcome these, and overcoming them step by step. If Bethel speaks of her *Schatten-seiten* this is but another proof that she is a living growth, that hers is the spirit of true Christianity, ever ready to take the lowest place, and when she has done her noblest work to say, "We are unprofitable servants." We must emphatically say it was not our business to look for any *Schatten-seiten;* but, having seen her ideal beauty, it *was* our business to set forth in fullest light both the work and the working secret of Bethel, that any who run may read, and go and do likewise. This, we take it, is the meaning of an ideal.

Bethel has a noble motto; we will give it in conclusion:—

"PRAY, AND WORK."

Not that they write it up anywhere; but enter any of their houses and you see it—the busy life, the simple Christianity—the very patients growing up to its wholesome meaning.

In minor respects, the English visitor will notice some few things strange to the English eye: for one thing, the utter absence of what we should think mere becomingness, say, in dress, in appearances; they are homely folk, and such adornments as they have are of the hidden man. We do not say that the "English eye" is all wrong in this, but Bethel is of a different stamp. Bethel could never "dress."

Bethel does not need any dress, any show, she is the handmaiden of Him who was meek and lowly in heart, who has said, "I am among you as one that serveth." Bethel has many missions, but they are all summed up in her mission of *service*. We have heard her pastor

say, when some one expressed anxiety lest he be overborne by the mighty load resting on his shoulders—his one regret was this, we heard him say, he could no longer serve, personally serve, some dying babe at *Kinderheim*.

What a crown this man will have when the servants are where the Master is!—a crown which yet is within the reach of every one of us, if we but thought of it! if we but lived for it!

* * *

It is in accordance with the desire of many readers, both British and American, whose letters are constantly reaching the writer, that the Bethel story contained in the foregoing chapters has been re-printed at a price within the reach of all. It is thought best to leave that story just as it was written some years ago—not that there have been no changes at Bethel! The Colony of Mercy, being a living growth, has extended in every direction—indeed marvellously! There have been other changes: Pastor Stürmer has gone to the Heavenly City, so has Housefather Meyer, so have numbers of Brothers and Sisters. The little Churchyard is growing, and the work is growing in the strength of lives laid down. Pastor von Bodelschwingh's wife, too, has left; but he—though laid low with "mortal disease" some eighteen months ago—has been spared to carry out yet further enterprise. At present he seems as eager, as active, as successful as ever. His manifold labours, at three-score and ten, naturally devolve more and more upon his fellow workers—an ever-growing band. But he is the central tower of strength among them.

What occupies him most just now is the extension of Wilhelmsdorf—as one may call it—viz., a still larger settlement on a portion of those vast North-German moors, which have been supposed to be as unproductive as Scotch moors are believed here, but which this wise Pastor is taking in hand with a scheme for reclaiming these waste lands by reclaiming broken-down lives. It is a scheme worthy of a great patriot, much approved by the Emperor, its national economy being of first-rate order. Those to be settled on the Moor Colony are either men who have passed through Wilhelmsdorf, or any of the other Farm Colonies, and have been found worthy of further assistance; or perhaps, without having drifted to a Labour Colony, they are of those who may be designated as the upper stratum of the unemployed. Such, after a period of probation, will be settled on those lands under a helpful law passed in Prussia a few years ago. Government provides the funds in the shape of a loan, and the rents are fixed at four per cent., covering the interest and forming a sinking fund for turning fixity of tenure gradually into ownership. They are in advance of us in Germany as regards wise national care of the poor!

That moorland scheme is capable of a great development, and there is no doubt that it will prove of economic value to the Fatherland. If any reader be desirous of any hints towards reclaiming either English or Scotch waste lands by means of British waste labour, let them go to Bethel and study the beginnings of Pastor von Bodelschwingh's Moorland Colony.

I cannot close these few lines without recording with deep thankfulness that this book in its first issue has not fallen on stony ground altogether; in America, I am

told, it has helped the cause of deaconesses, while the "Christian Union for Social Service" is its outcome here, thus far having two "Training Colonies"—or as we would rather say, "Colonies of Mercy"—one at Lingfield Surrey, the other at Starnthwaite near Kendal. Lingfield, planned after the pattern of Bethel, has now reached a vigorous adolescence, promising a fruitful manhood. Let readers go and see for themselves what has been done there in a few short years under the guidance and by the devotion of its most capable Director, Rev. J. L. Brooks—or "Pastor" Brooks, as the little epileptic children gathered under the motherly wing of Mrs. Brooks, and the broken-down men who in touch with his breezy manhood are learning to hope again—to "work and pray"—somehow quite naturally are calling him. He is not a "Bodelschwingh," for God never works by duplicates, and yet he is a "Bodelschwingh," if by that you mean a man fitted by God through his own life-story for such a work. But we want many Lingfields—we want one in every county!

And there is so much more to be done if our struggling masses are to be lifted to a level worthy of this great nation! It is for this reason that the present writer has put forth her more recent book—"BRITAIN'S NEXT CAMPAIGN"—earnestly hoping it may lead men and women to enrol themselves into an army of true Britons, whose *device* shall be "Our Brother's Keeper."

* * * * *

There is a science which says, "Survival of the Fittest," and capital, that awful power, says so too. But Bethel says—the spirit of Christianity says: "Salvation of the Least."

BIRD'S EYE VIEW O

SHOWING THE GROW

THE COLONY.

OF 30 YEARS.

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